DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 254 900 EA 017 548

AUTHOR	McCurdy, Jack
TITLE	The Role of the Principal in Effective Schools: Problems & Solutions. AASA Critical Issues Report.
INSTITUTION	American Association of School Administrators, Arlington, Va.
PUB DATE	83
NOTE	97p.; Produced by Education News Service, Sacramento, California for the American Association of School Administrators.
AVAILABLE FROM	Publications Sales, American Association of School Administrators, 1801 North Moore Street, Arlington, VA 22209 (AASA Stock No. 021-00839; $12.95 plus $2.50 postage and handling, prepaid; quantity discounts).
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses (070)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Administrative Principles; Administrator Attitudes; Administrator Characteristics; Administrator Evaluation; *Administrator Role; Administrator Selection; Board Administrator Relationship; Board of Education Role; Educational Administration; Educational Objectives; Elementary Secondary Education; Management Development; *Principals; *School Effectiveness; Stress Management; Superintendents
IDENTIFIERS	*Instructional Leadership

ABSTRACT

Recent research has suggested that the principal's role in the effectiveness of schools is far more important than had been believed earlier. What the principal's role typically is, what it ideally should be, and how it can be changed are the topics of this report. The first two chapters survey (1) the research on characteristics of principals of effective schools, and (2) studies of the actual circumstances faced by principals, revealing the demands that restrict principals' concentration on instructional leadership. The third chapter presents several techniques for exerting instructional leadership, including methods of working with personnel and improving school climate. Administrative skills valuable to principals are discussed next, since they affect the principal's efficiency and the school's sense of mission and effectiveness. The roles of the district superintendent and the school board in supporting the principal's efforts are treated in the fifth chapter. The three subsequent chapters cover the selection, inservice training, and evaluation of principals, all factors critical to developing effective leadership. The ninth and final chapter suggests methods for coping with principals' job stress. Checklists and sample forms selected from the literature, and data from surveys conducted for this report, are presented throughout the document. (PGD)

ED254900

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
W. Henly

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

AASA
Critical Issues
Report

The Role of the Principal in Effective Schools:

Problems & Solutions

American Association of School Administrators

EA 017 548

AASA
Critical Issues
Report

The Role of the Principal in Effective Schools:

Problems & Solutions

American Association of School Administrators

by Jack McCurdy

Produced by
Education News Service
Sacramento, Calif.
for the
American Association of School Administrators

The AASA Critical Issues Series

Many of the critical issues facing schools today are controversial. Seldom is there one best answer in dealing with these issues. What is best in one community may not be the best in another. That is why the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) decided to produce a series of Critical Issues Reports. These in-depth reports provide a wealth of information and ideas to help school administrators and school boards deal effectively with the challenge of assuring high quality education for students.

The Role of the Principal in Effective Schools: Problems and Solutions is the 14th in the AASA Critical Issues Series. Like the others, it provides an analysis and reports successful practices and advice from authorities. Many of the concerns and ideas included in this book were shared with AASA through two nationwide surveys of superintendents and principals. It is our hope that the information included in this publication will help schools plan and prepare for what they face in the years ahead. We have purposely prepared this publication in non-jargon English.

Our thanks to those who helped make this publication a reality — researchers and policy makers, administrators who responded to our surveys and interviews, and members of the AASA Site Administrators Committee who reviewed the manuscript and made suggestions which have been incorporated into the book.

The manuscript was written by Jack McCurdy, an education writer based in Morro Bay, Calif.

The editor was Shirley Boes Neill, Education News Service, Sacramento, Calif.

Paul B. Salmon
Executive Director
AASA

Gary Marx
Associate Executive Director, AASA
Office of Communications

Design and Graphics: Norman Lubeck, Burlingame, Calif.
Copyright 1983, American Association of School Administrators
Library of Congress Card No. 82-83589

Single copy, $12.95. Two to nine copies, 10% discount; 10 or more copies, 20% discount. Please add $2.50 to orders of $15 and under for postage and handling. Orders for less than $15 must be accompanied by payment in full. Order from AASA, 1801 North Moore St., Arlington, Va. 22209. Stock No. 021-00839.

This report was reviewed by AASA and approved for publication. Approval does not signify that the contents reflect the views or policies of AASA.

Contents

Introduction 5

I. **What the Research Says** 7

Principals alone do not have magic powers to create good schools, but they are the "critical agents" who can get things done, according to researchers.

II. **What Does the Principal Do?** 12

The principal's job has changed drastically over the years. It's more complex, more demanding. Yet, principals themselves say it can be handled effectively.

III. **The Principal as Instructional Leader** 19

The most important way for a principal to exert instructional leadership is to leave no doubt about school priorities.

IV. **The Principal as Manager** 39

Principals and superintendents define management skills as the ability to run a school, to organize people and resources, to use good human and public relations techniques, and to utilize effective communications.

V. **The Role of the Superintendent and Board** 56

"The care and feeding of principals is the single most important thing a superintendent can do," says one superintendent. School boards, too, can play a significant part in helping schools — and principals — to become more effective.

VI. **Selection of Principals** 65

The selection process is probably the most important step in obtaining capable principals.

VII. **Training of Principals** 74

More is known now about what needs to be done to improve inservice training of principals. Some "promising" new efforts are featured.

VIII. **Evaluation of Principals** 80

Experts explain how schools can improve evaluation of principals.

IX. **Stress and the Principal** 92

"Stress is an overworked term, but I can assure you it is very real," says a former principal. One way superintendents and boards can make the jobs of principals less stressful is simply by clarifying what is expected of them.

The Role of the PRINCIPAL in Effective Schools

Introduction

A new wave of hope for the future of America's public schools began to sweep the country in 1983. The despair that had marked the 1970s was replaced by a spirit of rejuvenation that promised to raise education to the top of the nation's agenda of priorities for reform.

Political leaders, educators, and citizens appeared ready to lock arms in determination to restore the schools to the position of respect and prominence that has signified their long history in this nation. This new mood triggered many state and local efforts to enact educational improvements, and a beginning was made in many regions to provide the necessary funds.

The Reagan Administration's National Commission on Excellence in Education — and a dozen or more other groups — capped this reform movement with recommendations for addressing "public perception that something is seriously remiss in our educational system."

Behind the fanfare that accompanied these renewal efforts lay a decade of research and experience of practitioners in identifying effective ways to make schools work better. It would have done little good to proclaim the dawning of a new era in public education without the knowledge of how to make the hope become a reality. But the research findings and the new-found confidence of practitioners provided a solid, new base for the undertaking.

The Decade of the Principal

Linked to this national reform program was another, though less heralded, movement. It, too, was founded on a newly developed information base. Moreover, it possesses potentially as much or more significance for the long-term revitalization of public education. It represents a new consensus among practitioners, researchers, and leading policy makers that the principalship holds one of the most important keys to excellence in schools.

Research findings on the way good schools function plus the accumulated experience of superintendents and principals combined to demonstrate that school-site leadership is an essential ingredient for successful schools.

This recognition runs headlong into "roughly 30 years of experimentation that has aimed money, effort, and hope in other directions," remarked Samuel G. Sava, executive director of the National Association of Elementary School Principals. "After three decades during which leadership has been expected from everyone else," he noted, "the 1980s could be the decade of the principal."

This Critical Issues Report traces the development of this emerging movement, and explores the ramifications for school reform.

The new focus on the principalship emerged from investigations into how schools make a difference in the education of youngsters.

To an unprecedented degree, the findings chronicle the specific ways that schools work their influence on students, and, conversely, what is missing when they do not bring about learning. The major factors turned out to be a school climate that is safe and orderly and conducive to learning, a schoolwide emphasis on basic skills instruction, high expectations of youngsters by teachers, a system of monitoring pupil progress that is tied to the school's academic goals — and strong leadership by the school principal.

These and other factors, including the roles of the superintendent and school board, are also vital to school success, but it is through the principalship that they all come to bear on the final outcome — student learning.

How Do Principals Do It?

In a number of ways, including:

1. Getting good teachers and helping them continue to grow professionally.
2. Providing instructional support through an emphasis on instruction, a good school climate, and resources for teachers.
3. Skilled supervision/evaluation of teachers.
4. Close monitoring of student progress.
5. Motivating and coordinating instruction among teachers.
6. Eliminating obstacles to the accomplishment of the school's mission.

Principals, are, of course, expected to function as good managers — people who not only provide for the comfort and safety of students and staff but who handle such tasks as discipline problems, keeping an eye on the budget, and communicating effectively with the central office, teachers and other building staff, and parents and other community members. These managerial responsibilities of principals do not receive as much attention as instructional responsibilities in this Critical Issues Report — not because they are unimportant but simply because of space limitations.

Developing Leaders

There is also agreement on this critical point: Principals are made, not born.

Certainly some are blessed with more natural leadership ability than others, but the skills required for effective leadership have been identified. They *can* be learned. For example, one crucial way that principals produce good schools is by making clear that instruction is the top priority.

In their responses to the survey for this report and in interviews, principals and superintendents expressed confidence that many more principals can become effective leaders because of the "how to" knowledge now available, the consensus that has formed around their mission of instructional leaders, and the availability of new systems to transmit that knowledge to them.

But being a principal — much less an effective one — is not an easy job. The demands on principals have become more complex as the demands on public education for quality performance have intensified. Principals must learn — and be helped to learn — sound time-management methods and ways to handle the stress that comes with the job, if they are to function with maximum effectiveness.

Principals must be held accountable for the performances of the schools they administer. Principals say this as loud as anyone. Authorities in the field and principals agree, moreover, that evaluation must be fair, objective, and based on realistic and mutually set goals. Principals emphasized that they are willing to be evaluated rigorously if the evaluation systems are sound and *if they are given the necessary authority to accomplish their goals.*

Two areas with great potential for strengthening the principalship are selection and training. As with evaluation, the processes being used to select principals are being upgraded through the use of more objective criteria and methods for picking the best men and women for the job.

Inservice training is being concentrated more on the tasks of the principalship and the goals that individual school districts establish.

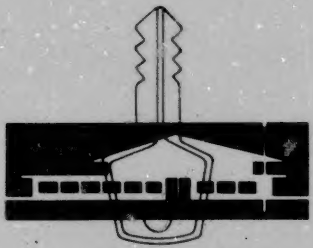
The Role of Superintendents and Boards

Leadership by principals should not be viewed as a panacea for education's problems. Other factors must be stressed as well. Superintendents and school boards, for example, have the authority and wherewithal to "make or break" principals as they pursue educational excellence.

What can superintendents and boards do to help principals exercise leadership? First and foremost, by exercising leadership in their own right to create the conditions which translate into good school districts. As all would agree, commitment and resolve are essential elements of such leadership. Principals and leading superintendents are convinced that principals must be given the necessary authority to make schools work — and that they should be held accountable for the results.

Superintendents and boards must use the new processes for selecting and training principals and then help principals stay abreast of developments in education. And, perhaps most important, school leaders must give principals the financial, moral, and political support they require to carry out their responsibilities.

The 1980s could well be the decade of the principal. If it is, it could also be the decade of America's public schools.



Chapter I

What the Research Says

"Most everyone agrees that the principal is the key to a good school." That statement from the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) accurately sums up the conclusions of researchers about the crucial role of secondary as well as elementary principals in producing effective schools.

Principals alone do not have magic powers to create good schools. It would be a mistake, moreover, to focus on principals at the expense of other critical factors such as teachers, textbooks, curriculum, school climate, funding, and the leadership of superintendents, other members of the administrative team, and school boards.

In a sense, the principalship is special among all the components of the educational process. The principal is the critical agent who can get things done. Recognition is growing that the kind of person in the job will likely determine the kind of school that results.

The notion that principals are all-important is relatively new to research and the field of education in general. But so is the now-prevailing idea that schools can, in fact, be effective in spite of the family background of children, poverty, and other powerful influences on learning.

Actually, the idea had a rebirth in the 1970s. The research that showed schools could teach all kinds of children successfully also discovered that the leadership of principals is the key to that success.

Not long ago, some researchers dismissed schools as incapable of making a difference in the lives of children and unable to overcome the "nonschool" factors that were thought to determine who could learn and who could not.

The time was the 1960s, and the origin of that pessimistic view was a research report called *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, later known simply as the Coleman Report (after its leading author, sociologist James Coleman).

The Coleman Report is sometimes remembered for its implications that the most promising way to improve education of poor and minority children was to put them in integrated schools. At that time, 1966, school desegregation was the dominating issue in education, and the Coleman Report was seen primarily in that light.

But the central finding of the report dealt with school effectiveness. It said that schooling had less to do with how much children learned than other things like how much education their parents had, family income, and who their classmates were.

The New Research

Numerous reputable researchers took exception to the Coleman Report's main conclusion that schools have relatively little impact on youngsters. Even more debatable were the distorted interpretations of the report that went so far as to say that schools did not make *any* difference in education.

By the early 1970s, other researchers were conducting careful, long-term studies of the effects of schooling. Some of the first studies simply documented the fact that schools with students with much the same ethnicity and family background and income had varying learning rates, depending on which school they attended. Obviously, the school was having an influence on children's learning.

Effective Schools

Researchers have been able to construct a much clearer picture of a successful school than ever existed. Some of their findings confirm commonly held notions based on experience. Other findings contradict what was thought to be effective. All of the research supports what principals need to know if they are to become instructional leaders.

In general, researchers have found that "when the goals of the school are clear, reasonably uniform, and perceived as important, and when the staff is committed to them, successful schools result," wrote James M. Lipham in *Effective Principal, Effective School,* published by NASSP.

Wilbur Brookover and associates, in their study, *School Social Systems and Student Achievement* (Praeger, New York; 1979), put it this way:

> *"Teachers and principals in higher achieving schools express the belief that students can master their academic work and that they expect them to do so. They are committed to seeing that their students learn to read, to do mathematics and other academic work. These teacher and principal expectations are expressed in such a way that the students perceive that they are expected to learn, and the school academic norms are recognized as setting a standard of high achievement. These norms and the teachers' commitment are expressed in the instructional activities which absorb most of the school day."*

How are these commitments translated into characteristics of effective schools?

According to a survey of the research on effective schools conducted by Michael Cohen for the National Institute of Education (NIE), such schools are characterized by:

- Strong administrative leadership by the school principal, especially in instructional matters.
- A school climate conducive to learning; one that is safe and orderly and free of disruptions from discipline and vandalism.
- Schoolwide emphasis on basic skills instruction, resulting from a consensus among teachers and the principal on that approach as the primary instructional goal.
- Teacher expectations that students are capable of reaching high levels of academic achievement.
- A system for monitoring and assessing pupil performance that is tied to the school's instructional objectives.

"The difference between a good school and a poor school is often the difference between a good and poor principal."

—James Bryant Conant
Education in the Junior
High School Years
Educational Testing Service; 1960

Role of the Principal

What does research say about the role of principals in determining the character of their schools?

Principals, of course, have long been considered central figures in the overall scheme of education because of their function as chief administrative officers at the local level. In most states, their responsibilities for administering local schools are defined by law, and they exercise legal authority delegated by school boards and superintendents.

But before the upsurge in research on effective schools during the 1970s, interest focused almost exclusively on teaching, curriculum, and textbooks.

"Until recently, researchers and funding agencies alike have underestimated the importance of the school principal as an agent" affecting school outcomes, said William D. Greenfield in "A Review of Research on the Principalship: 1971-1981," a report prepared for NIE.

Although research on the principalship still is in its early stages, Greenfield noted, it already has come to recognize principals as "important to the development of knowledge and practices useful in enhancing the conditions of learning and improving the consequences of teaching for our nation's youngsters."

In most studies on school effectiveness, researchers naturally began to ask what makes some schools different from others. As they probed for reasons behind the differences, they discovered that how schools are run corresponds with how well they perform. It was not enough to identify sharp differences among classrooms and the impact of teachers on students. The question that was pursued — for the first time — was why whole schools were effective or ineffective. In case after case, the differences were traced to the actions of principals.

Grade level is important. Obviously, some distinctions exist between the way elementary and secondary principals are able to affect their schools. Elementary schools are smaller. Secondary schools usually have larger administrative staffs through which principals can work. Elementary classrooms are normally self-contained and the curriculum less complex than in junior and senior high schools where the subject matter is more specialized and classes are organized around subject fields.

Nevertheless, all schools can achieve. Researchers found that elementary and secondary principals have much in common when it comes to how their behavior influences their schools. Typically, it is simply necessary to adapt effective approaches to different school situations. Setting high academic standards transcends almost everything else, including grade levels.

In one of the most thorough surveys of its kind, David L. Clark and associates reviewed 97 studies of urban school achievement and drew these conclusions about principals:

- Principals are crucial in determining school success.
- Their influence is felt through the attitudes they breed and the motivation they impart in creating a climate of achievement.
- Successful schools establish clear goals and carry out staff development as a result of the principal's leadership.

Van Cleve Morris and his associates conducted for NIE a particularly detailed study of principals on the job. Called "The Urban Principal," it concluded that the "activity of the principal can affect the work of the school, particularly through an impact upon the atmosphere or 'climate' in which teaching and learning take place."

New York findings. Two inner-city schools — one high-achieving and one low-achieving but otherwise virtually identical in their student populations — were studied by the performance review section of the New York State Education Department to determine why their reading scores differed so drastically.

As reported by the late Ron Edmonds in "What Do We Know About Teaching in Urban Schools?" (CEMREL, Inc., St. Louis; 1979), the principals turned out to be a determining factor in the schools' effectiveness.

The study found:

- Administrative behavior, policies, and practices in the schools appeared to have a significant impact on school effectiveness.
- The more effective school was led by an administrative team that provided a good balance between both management and instructional skills.
- The administrative team in the more effective school had developed a plan for dealing with student's reading problems and had implemented the plan throughout the school.

Michigan findings. Another study was conducted by Wilbur Brookover and L. W. Lezotte to find out why one group of Michigan schools was showing consistent improvements in pupil performance and another similar group was declining (Institute for Research on Teaching, Michigan State University; 1979). Among other things, the researchers found "a clear difference in the principal's role in the improving and the declining schools.

"In the improving schools," the researchers explained, "the principal is more likely to be an instructional leader, is more of a disciplinarian, and perhaps most of all, assumes responsibility for the evaluation of the achievement of basic objectives.

"The principals in the declining schools," Brookover and Lezotte said, "appear to be permissive and to emphasize informal and collegial relationships with the teachers. They [the principals] put more emphasis on general public relations and less emphasis upon evaluation of the school's effectiveness in providing a basic education for the students."

Leadership: The Key

In practically every case where school success is attributed to the principal, "leadership" is identified as the key trait that comes through most prominently. Leadership, of course, can be a vague term that is elusive to define. But while the research provides no consensus on a precise definition for leadership, researchers almost uniformly mean a conscious effort to improve the quality of teaching, instruction, and the school — with student achievement as the No. 1 objective.

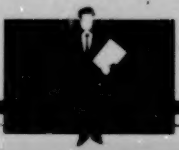
One of the early (1965) studies of leadership by N. C. Gross and R. E. Herriott found a clear link betwen the leadership of principals and the professional performance of teachers and learning of students.

More recently, a study at the University of Indiana of 59 sucessful urban schools described principals who exhibited strong leadership styles. It said such principals:

- Take the initiative in identifying and articulating goals and priorities for their schools. They run their schools rather than allowing them to be run by force of habit.
- Understand the school's instructional program inside and out and make this their first priority.
- Spend about half their time in the halls and classrooms.
- Care more about academic progress of students than about collegial relations with teachers and other staff members.
- Handpick their own faculty members, even when they have to fight bureaucracies or unions to do it.
- Set standards in the form of high expectations for both teachers and students.

What Must Principals Do?

Nancy J. Pitner of the Center for Educational Policy and Management at the University of Oregon reported this finding of numerous studies: Principals are effective when they direct the activities of teachers and students toward attainment of goals.



> **"The secondary school, like any other corporate endeavor, requires conscious and constant administration. No school can realize its purposes without someone assuming the responsibility of helping the many persons involved to clarify objectives, identify progress. Moreover, if utter chaos is to be avoided, someone must integrate into a meaningful whole the discrete, disparate efforts of those who, taken together, constitute the school. It is the principal who is charged with this vital leadership role."**
>
> **—George E. Melton and**
> **Jon Stanavage**
> **"Job Specifications for Principals"**
> ***Education Digest;* October 1970**

One study she cited said they do this by:

- Frequently observing or participating in classroom instruction.
- Communicating expectations clearly to teachers.
- Making decisions about the instructional program.
- Coordinating the instructional program.
- Having and communicating high standards of expectations for the instructional program.

Skills needed. What kinds of skills do principals need to exert this kind of instructional leadership? Michael Cohen and A. Lorri Manasse compiled a list of general skills for NIE. They said principals need to know:

- How to organize and sustain an effective instructional program.
- The nature of the learning process and curricular practices.
- How to organize and carry out staff development.
- Methods for implementing change and promoting continuity and stability in schools.

Working with faculty. One of the most important ways in which principals influence schools is through their relationships with the teaching faculty. Research shows that the administrative behavior of principals directly affects teacher morale, Pitner noted.

More specifically, when principals work closely with teachers on instruction, teachers are more satisfied with their jobs and their attitudes are more positive.

One study by Elizabeth Cohen and associates (Stanford Center for Research and Development in Teaching, Stanford University; 1977) found that effective principals offer rewards, resources, and personal interaction with teachers. In return, teachers cooperate and will accept joint responsibility, with principals, for instructional outcomes.

An important function of principals emphasized in several studies was that of coordination: Effective principals were found to coordinate, discuss, and advise on instruction while ineffective principals did little of this.

School Management

Like leadership, school management is another area of a principal's responsibility that has been defined by research in terms of how it affects classroom instruction. Put another way, researchers have viewed management by principals as effective when it results in effective instruction.

Researchers have ranked as extremely important the ability of principals to manage their professional time, make sound decisions, allocate resources wisely, direct staff, evaluate personnel, and carry out school and district policies. But they do not assess these management capabilities in isolation. Rather, they ask the question: How does the principal's management performance contribute to student learning?

For example, researchers have found that effective time management tells a good deal about the quality of a school's administration. Why? Because it also indicates how much time a principal will have at his or her disposal for directing the instructional program. Some principals get buried under administrative details. Attention to instruction gets squeezed out — and suffers.

In order to produce more effective schools, principals today are often expected to exert leadership in altering instructional programs, frequently in sweeping terms. They are asked to accomplish the tricky task of bringing about change while avoiding the disruption that change often threatens to create.

The managerial techniques for pulling off such a feat have been little studied, said William Greenfield in his report for NIE. But it is clear from research that good principals do it. "In more instructionally effective schools," Greenfield said, "the principal appears to have successfully integrated demands for stability with the necessity of improvement."

Personal Characteristics

Besides the kinds of skills and abilities already mentioned, personal characteristics have been identified by researchers as important in what constitutes effective principals.

The spectrum of such characteristics is almost inexhaustible, ranging from basic intelligence to the way different people respond to unexpected situations.

As Cohen and Manasse put it in their work for NIE: "By its very nature, educational work is often filled with unpredictable exigencies and ambiguity and frequently poses situations which cannot be readily managed by the straightforward application of standard operating procedures and uniform policies."

The principal who is resourceful and unflappable, therefore, is bound to be more successful than the one who cannot cope with the demands and pressures of the job.

Not surprisingly, research has been unable to measure and categorize all the personal traits that go into the makeup of effective principals — and probably never will. Human nature is too elusive for that kind of scientific precision. But it has been able to identify some general characteristics that appear to be important as well as unimportant for success on the job.

One study indicated that these four personal characteristics are related to strong leadership qualities of principals:

- A high level of academic achievement in college.
- A high degree of interpersonal skill.
- Motivation for public service.
- Commitment of off-duty time to the job.

Another trait that researchers have found important in effective principals is intelligence (or "complex cognitive structures," as one investigator put it). In a study of 68 principals in California, high intelligence was one of three factors (along with being conscientious and relaxed) associated with administrative effectiveness.

After reviewing research on personal characteristics of principals, Greenfield concluded that "intelligence, personal value orientations, interpersonal skills, tolerance for ambiguity, propensity to take risks, and willingness to consider alternative views" are some of the traits of good principals. While much of the research in this area is far from thorough, Greenfield added, it does provide valuable insights into the qualities of effective principals.

Conclusion: Research has come a long way in helping to determine what makes effective schools, what role principals play in that process, and how principals can be effective leaders.

Unfortunately, as Steven T. Bossert of the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development noted: Research does not provide models that always explain how specific acts by principals produce activities that enable students to succeed in school.

That may come in time. For now, researchers and practitioners agree that the body of knowledge accumulated so far can contribute mightily to policies and practices that will produce better schools.

Chapter II

What Does the Principal Do?

More than anything else, current research on effective principals reveals the potential for strong leadership in creating good schools. Turning that potential into practice, however, requires knowledge about principals, their jobs, and their problems.

Describing what principals do is not easy. Research in recent years has turned up a few surprises. It has often clashed with a number of preconceptions and many textbook descriptions of the job.

One thing is definite: The principalship has changed drastically over the years, and principals aren't what they once were.

The origins of the principalship offer insight into the way the role has evolved. Back in the 19th century when public schools got their toehold in America, principals were actually "principal teachers" or "head teachers." They were out of the classroom only part of the time.

Lay school boards took care of most of the administration, and the principal-teachers performed numerous clerical chores and generally took over when board members were away. For the most part, they taught classes. Their primary expertise lay in teaching, and their relationship to other teachers was as senior or head teachers, not as managers.

As the nation grew, schools got larger. More complex, modern-day bureaucracies took shape within school districts. School boards soon turned over administration to full-time professionals, and the school principal became the "directing manager" instead of the "presiding teacher," as one historian described it. The responsibility for supervising teachers and overseeing the curriculum shifted from boards to principals, whose teaching duties were all but phased out.

Today's Principal

By the early 20th century, the job of the principal as school manager and instructional supervisor had been developed as we know it today. Since then that dual role has spread throughout nearly all schools, rural and urban, large and small.

The evolution of the principalship over the years clearly has been away from the classroom — away from a prime focus on instructional supervision — and toward professional management. But how far has it gone? Has it been at the expense of instructional quality? How has the job changed in recent years?

Until very recently, no one had adequate answers to these important questions. Textbooks on school administration provide little help. They usually concentrate on the expected duties of the office, assuming that the ideal more or less corresponds to reality.

Textbook accounts only serve to point up the vast differences between such portrayals and real-life experiences as described by principals themselves. Principals know that duty statements and job descriptions are sometimes a far cry from what they do. Yet even they have difficulty describing their day-to-day routines.

Accurate descriptions are understandably difficult because the job involves such a jumble of big and little things. These things are hard to categorize due, if nothing else, to their sheer numbers. But careful observation has begun to produce some good descriptions.

Studies of principals' work show it is characterized by "fragmentation, brevity, verbal (as opposed to written) communication, physical movement, one-on-one interactions, interruptions, and crisis," according to Michael Cohen and A. Lorri Manasse in their work for the

National Institute of Education (NIE).

William D. Greenfield said in *A Review of Research on the Principalship: 1971-1981* that there is a consistent pattern among elementary and secondary principals of "organizational maintenance functions (that is, administrative tasks) and attending scheduled and unscheduled meetings."

In a study of a group of Chicago principals (detailed in "The Urban Principal"), Van Cleve Morris and his associates found a close similarity between elementary and secondary principals in how they spend their time.

In both cases, nearly half their time was spent in their offices — in meetings, in individual conferences, talking on the telephone. A distant second involved business away from the school — at the district's central office, for example. Then came walking through school corridors and lunch rooms, patrolling and helping to supervise campuses. Less than 10 percent of principals' time was spent in classrooms.

Morris and his associates were struck by the "tumble of events" that converge on the principal throughout the work day. They recited a typical episode: "The principal (had to) deal with a critical problem in the freshman history sequence. And yet, the entire matter (was) elbowed aside . . . by a cascading barrage of other concerns — auditorium seats, a foul-mouthed girl, bomb threats, and . . . cockroaches!"

William J. Martin and Donald J. Willower observed five secondary principals at close hand and recorded an average of nearly 150 separate tasks performed daily by each. Unplanned meetings with individuals and groups dominated their time, followed by scheduled meetings, desk work, and exchanges of conversations averaging less than one minute in duration.

Throughout the study, they noted, some 407 separate activities by principals were interrupted by 1,457 other tasks. In fact, 50 percent of all observed activities were either interrupted or were interruptions, they said in an article in *Educational Administration Quarterly*.

The principals' time was devoted primarily to administrative tasks such as class schedules, transportation, and attendance (36.5 percent), followed by student control (23.8 percent), instructional matters (17.4 percent), extracurricular activities (14.7 percent), and other miscellaneous activities (7.6 percent).

The observations of these principal-watchers indicate that principals are preoccupied with the most immediate and pressing situations, leaving little time for reflection or long-range planning.

"A principal: the education world's most difficult job."

—Bob Austin
Superintendent
Wessington Springs, S.Dak.

Instructional Leaders or Managers?

It is also clear that most tasks principals perform fall under the general heading of administration or management. This entails:

- Overseeing the school.
- Making sure all its parts function properly.
- Taking care of discipline and pupil control.
- Directing extracurricular activities.
- Keeping in touch with the outside community.

Some variations exist. The larger the school, the more the principal performs management tasks, which helps explain why secondary principals (whose schools are usually larger) tend to be more tied down with administration than are elementary principals. But the differences are only in degree.

Such observations lead researchers to conclude that as a general rule principals are *not* instructional leaders in their schools.

As Lorri Manasse put it in her work for the NIE: "Principals may prefer to see themselves as instructional leaders, but the reality is that they spend much of their time on management functions." The studies of the principalship agree that instructional activities get short shrift, when compared to management duties.

Here are the words of one principal:

> *"We aren't doing what we should be doing. We never seem to have enough time . . . When I started as a principal, the assistant superintendent advised me, 'Harold, 75 percent of your time*

> *should be spent in evaluation, instruction, and curriculum.' I couldn't even do it then. Today, it's reversed. I don't spend 25 percent of my time with the people who are handling the instructional program."*

A recent study that compared elementary, junior, and senior high school principals found the same to be true across all three grade spans: Instructional leadership was at best the second-ranked major activity. Office responsibilities ranked first. Elementary principals were more involved in instructional activities, but only slightly.

In his case studies of Chicago principals, Van Cleve Morris discovered that elementary principals spent only 9 percent of their work day in classrooms, and secondary principals, only 7 percent. Obviously, instructional leadership is not confined to visits to classrooms and should not necessarily be equated with such activities. But Morris concluded that this finding does illustrate what is lacking. His comments about secondary principals could be applied to his studies of elementary principals as well:

> *"Secondary principals are . . . conspicuous by their relative absence from the classroom. In professional circles, it is generally thought that a primary responsibility of the principal is the evaluation and improvement of instruction. However, our field work revealed that secondary principals do not spend much time doing this."*

"While many principals might dream of being effective instructional leaders by enhancing the activities of teaching and learning in their schools, in reality their experience is shaped by the press of administrative and managerial functions that mitigate against that dream becoming fact."

— Arthur Blumberg and
William Greenfield
The Effective Principal

Principals are not happy with this situation. They know their role should be that of instructional leader, and, in fact, they want to fulfill that role. A survey by the Educational Research Service (ERS), for example, showed that elementary principals consider instruction as a top priority among their responsibilities.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) in its study, *The Effective Principal,* reported similar findings. The secondary principals who were surveyed said they regard personnel (evaluation, advising, conferencing, recruiting) and program development (curriculum and instructional leadership) as their most important tasks.

Thus, Arthur Blumberg and William Greenfield wrote in their book, *The Effective Principal* (Allyn and Bacon, Boston; 1980):

> *"Principals themselves may aspire to the traditional idea of principal as instructional leader, [but] most find themselves besieged on a daily basis with the nitty-gritty administrative tasks involved in keeping the ship on an even keel, in maintaining the existing order in their schools."*

Lack of Time: The Major Constraint

What prohibits many principals from acting as instructional leaders in their schools?

The easy answer is that they don't have the time or can't find the time. This one four-letter word — time — seems to best characterize the problem that most principals face in becoming instructional leaders.

In *The Effective Principal,* NASSP analyzed the specific reasons that principals gave for being unable to devote adequate time to instructional matters. These were the factors principals cited:

- Lack of administrative staff.
- The need to be visible to students.
- Emergencies, crisis management.
- Discipline problems.
- Immediate ongoing needs of people.
- "Administrivia," the paper bureaucracy.

In the ERS report, elementary principals said they were rarely able to structure blocks of time that could be devoted to a single activity, such as evaluation and planning of the instructional program. If and when such blocks of time were set aside, they usually were taken up with staff problems or meetings with parents.

A three-minute rut? One study of elementary and secondary principals reported to the American Educational Research Association by Cynthia Porter-Gehrie and others found that principals typically complete tasks in less than three minutes. These principals indicated they tended to become frustrated with tasks that they could not complete immediately.

In fact, they tended to "consciously expose themselves to situations where new tasks are likely to emerge." This suggests that principals may get into such a habit of dealing in short and quick events that they eventually develop it into a professional style.

Personal style and school environment may dampen the spirit of leadership. William J. Martin and Donald J. Willower also delved into the behavior of high school principals as instructional leaders. While it was clear, they said, that principals were "the only individuals within the school who had the overall perspective" to be instructional leaders, they often did so in only a "passive fashion." That is, their leadership "did not include active instructional or curricular involvement." Rather, instruction was considered essentially the "province of the teaching staff," and "the principals deferred to the teachers in technical matters."

The insights of Martin and Willower suggest that the personal style of principals and the culture of schools may also be important factors in determining whether instructional leadership is exercised effectively or at all.

What Principals Do — And Would Like To Do

Elementary

Activity	Ranking Actual	Ranking Ideal
Administration	1	4
Discipline	2	10
Public relations	3	5
Instruction	4	1
Morale building	5	6
Public services	6	7
Teacher evaluation	7	8
Curriculum supervision	8	2
Staff selection	9	3
Self-evaluation	10	9

Source: Robert J. Krajewski, "Role Implications of a Rank Ordering Process by Elementary Principals," paper presented to National Association of Elementary School Principals; 1977.

Secondary

Management	1	3
Personnel	2	2
Student events	3	4
Student behavior	4	7
Instructional program	5	1
District office	6	9
Planning	7	5
Community affairs	8	8
Professional development	9	6

Source: *The Senior High School Principalship*, National Association of Secondary School Principals; 1978.

Knowledge of Instruction

Principals must be knowledgeable about instruction in order to advise, evaluate, and direct teachers. Are they?

Van Cleve Morris and his associates found that the principals they observed were "exceptionally well informed." They appeared to be well read, the investigators said, and they were "generally well aware of recent trends in teaching practice, curriculum, evaluation, financial management, budget making, personnel practices, staff development, student discipline, and similar areas."

Lack of knowledge or expertise on the part of principals is not mentioned in the research on the principalship as an obstacle to effective leadership.

This does not mean that principals know everything they should know. Morris discovered, however, that principals "are not very successful . . . in utilizing this information to achieve the goals of the school, nor are they effective in using this knowledge to enhance their performance."

This, in turn, "limits the productivity of the schools" and demoralizes the principals themselves, Morris said.

Putting what principals know into practice is "frustrated by political, attitudinal, and structural factors inherent in school systems," he added. In some cases, he explained, school superintendents or boards interfered with plans of principals to improve instruction. In others, principals lacked skill or determination to accomplish objectives.

How the Principal's Job Has Changed

In answer to the surveys for this report, both principals and superintendents gave their opinions about changes in the principal's job. Here are some of their responses:

Principals

"The dictatorial, non-compromising administrator is no longer acceptable by personnel or the community." — R. L. Calabrese, Principal, Granby (Mass.) High School.

"The principal's co-workers have become much better trained and are able to make decisions independently and cooperatively. The expectations — accountability — of the entire school community are greater." — Paul Beilfuss, Principal, Winkelman School, Glenview, Ill.

"Secondary school principals in the 1950s were expected to have an impressive personal presence, excellent knowledge of the community, and curriculum expertise. In the late 1960s and 1970s [they were expected to have] physical capability to deal with drugs, outsiders, disruption. It is essentially a boring job, though the hectic schedule prevents one from noticing this too often." — An anonymous middle school principal.

There has been a shift from instructional skills to management skills." — Albert Doremus, Principal, Franklin Avenue Middle School, Franklin Lakes, N.J.

"There is more focus on the principal as manager of a nonprofit enterprise with related accountability." — Nicholas A. Fischer, former principal now on special assignment, Key West, Fla.

Superintendents

"Twenty-five years ago, we asked the principal to trot along behind the superintendent who led. Ten to fifteen years ago, he was asked to trot along beside the superintendent and share leadership. Now, we have matured. The principal runs his own race, supported by the superintendent." — Bill Lincoln, Superintendent, Moretown, Vt.

"The role of principal has changed from maintainer to leader." — Philip Ellis, Superintendent, Vernal, Utah.

"Just as in the case of superintendents, principals used to command a certain amount of respect by virtue of their position. Now they must earn that respect by exercising strong leadership. With the changes in teacher-administrator relationships, principals must possess skills which will enhance human relations within their buildings." — Ronald Walton, Superintendent, Bloomington, Ind.

"Managerial ability was number one 10 years ago. Now educational knowledge is more important [for principals]." — Harold R. Hosey, Superintendent, Emporia, Kans.

"Society has changed [along with] parents, pupils, and staff . . . 'Rights for everyone' requires a great deal of administrative skill rather than autocratic administration." — Lester D. Plotner, Superintendent, Lincoln, Ill.

"The principal's role has evolved from that of an authoritarian with total control who shuffled a lot of paper, to a person who must work with diverse groups under trying conditions. Students are required to learn far more in school just to be able to exist in this world, and the principal is the center of this — the one who initiates things and makes them happen." — Kevin C. Brummer, Superintendent, Bassett, Nebr.

For the principal, there is "more emphasis on instructional leadership for academic excellence." — Janice Thiessen, Superintendent, Edmond, Okla.

In still others, Morris found, teacher unions intervened through contract arrangements with districts.

The point of Morris' observations is this: Knowing what to do is not enough; being able to use knowledge and knowing how to get things done are equally important for principals to be effective.

Student Discipline: A Major Job

Student discipline takes up a big part of the time that principals devote to what is loosely called administration or management of schools. Both elementary and secondary principals report an inordinate amount of their energy goes to maintaining order and disciplining students.

A report by the Educational Research Service showed elementary principals ranked student discipline just below the top among demands on their time. Secondary principals responding to the NASSP survey for *The Effective Principal* cited student behavior as the No. 1 area that took more time than it should.

How does this relate to instructional leadership? After lengthy observation of two high schools, Philip Cusick of Michigan State University concluded that "because of the emphasis (by principals) on preserving discipline and an orderly atmosphere . . . teachers have been left to make decisions on curriculum in conformance with their own preference."

Cusick told a seminar at the University of Oregon's Center for Educational Policy and Management that "the teachers often taught subjects very different from those listed in the official curriculum."

The main message in Cusick's commentary is this: What principals do — or fail to do — can directly affect how much students learn.

Changing Pressures

The demands on principals' time have changed markedly during the past decade or so. On that, principals, researchers, and even casual observers agree. This has altered the job in many ways.

In two surveys for this Critical Issues Report, superintendents and principals were asked if the skills needed for the job of principal had changed. (Note: The surveys of 1,200 superintendents and 425 principals were intended to draw a reservoir of information; they were not intended to be a scientific survey.)

Most of the principals who responded said the skills needed for the job had changed. A majority of superintendents who responded also noted a change in required job skills.

How have they changed? In numerous ways.

More complex; more demanding. Most principals and superintendents responding to the surveys said the principal's job has gotten more complex: the demands of the job have grown in number and variety. "Too many people demand-

Some Things Learned About the Principalship

How Much Power? "The principal has considerable latitude in decision making regarding school matters."

How the Job Works. "The work that principals do is characterized by brevity, diversity, and fragmentation, and it is usually accomplished through informal . . . exchanges or formal meetings."

Who Shapes the Job. "The work that principals do is shaped by expectations of superiors and subordinates as well as by students and adults in the community."

Importance of School Size. "The work that a principal does is influenced more by the size and location of the school than whether it is an elementary, junior/middle, or high school."

Influence of Personality and Experience. "The manner in which the principal conducts his work, his style, is shaped more by the principal's basic personality structure and previous experiences than by formal education, years in education, or type, size, and location of the school in which he works."

Source: William D. Greenfield, "A Review of Research on the Principalship: 1971-1981," prepared for the NIE.

ing too many things," summarized one superintendent.

A Rand Corp. study which looked at changes in the principal's role during the late 1970s found that "principals are now more constrained by rules, more subject to public scrutiny, and less in control of their own schedules."

Principals interviewed for the Rand study said they were spending more time on paperwork and on working with parents on noninstructional needs of students, such as health, discipline, and custodial care. As a result, they were spending less time on instructional supervision.

Shift in public attitude. Principals and superintendents also agreed in the surveys for this report that the second most important change affecting the job has been in the public's attitude toward schools. They said the public has become more questioning and demanding, family structure has been altered, and society in general has undergone numerous shifts that have affected schools.

Effects of collective bargaining. Principals and superintendents both contend that collective bargaining by teachers has also changed principals' jobs by reorienting their relationships with teachers and other school personnel and by requiring them to spend more time on items included in contracts.

Conclusion. The power of principals has risen and fallen over the last half century, as school boards and central offices assumed greater control and then relaxed their authority as decentralization concepts gained vogue.

Even now, trends are often at odds with each other. Union contracts, for example, are nearly always negotiated at the central office level, while demands for instructional quality focus on responsibility and performance of principals and teachers at the local school level.

> **"The tempo of life in a principal's work day is not conducive to serene reflection. There is a certain tumble of events, one after another, which requires a quick facility to move abruptly from one subject matter to another. The principal is expected to store in his 'memory drum' the contents of hundreds of conversations, many of them not related to one another, and to retrieve the relevant elements of these conversations later the same day, tomorrow, or next week."**
>
> **— Van Cleve Morris**
> **and Associates**
> ***The Urban Principal***

In spite of forces to the contrary, the prevailing belief — even among principals — is that the job of a principal can be handled effectively

As William J. Martin and Donald J. Willower put it: "Although it can be argued that principals have had their power diluted, perhaps considerably, by teacher unions, citizen groups, courts, and central office personnel, the principals [included in their study] remained in command of their situations throughout each day . . . They operated as the central authority figures within their work spheres, and, while their power to shape events within the school was far less than absolute, the principals were the focal points of organizational governance."

In short, the principalship still holds the key to what happens in schools.

Chapter III

The Principal as Instructional Leader

A decade or more of research on schooling has yielded extensive information on concrete ways to improve schools.

First, more is known about what makes good schools than ever before. This is critical because it makes possible the next two statements.

Second, everything points to "instructional leadership" as the main ingredient in good schools, and to the principal as the individual who must exercise that leadership.

Third, it is possible to describe in more precise terms exactly what makes a principal an instructional leader.

The term itself — instructional leader — sums up the primary role of the principal in the quest for excellence in education. Not just leadership alone — more is needed than a strong principal with concrete ideas and skills to make the ideas work. It must be leadership toward educational achievement — by a principal who makes instructional quality the top priority of the school and brings that vision to realization. If that means doing less of something else that is the principal's responsibility, then so be it.

Leadership and instructional excellence are inseparable and essential elements, as perhaps never before in public education.

Equally significant is what has been learned about how to improve schools. Research and the experience of principals indicate that leadership does not require in-born talents.

Rather, leadership has been shown to consist of skills and attitudes that can be imparted to principals through training. In other words, the knowledge about what makes an effective principal can be used to produce more good principals — and better schools.

Although knowledge of how principals become effective is not yet complete, it is growing rapidly and already is adequate to make a profound difference in education. The issue, then, is not one of identifying people with natural ability as leaders, but more one of applying what is known.

Perhaps the biggest task is clearing away the vague notions about leadership that have obscured an understanding of the term.

What Is Leadership?

While many definitions exist, some are clearly superior to others when it comes to providing educational excellence in schools.

Leadership, as defined by George Terry in his book *Principles of Management* (Richard D. Irwin Publishing Co., Homewood, Ill.; 1960), is the "activity of influencing people to strive willingly for group goals."

Or, as Scott Thomson, executive director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), put it: "Leadership is best defined as 'getting the job done through people.'" The job, unmistakably, is to provide quality instruction.

To do that job, principals need to give their schools a personal stamp that conveys a sense of purpose and direction through well developed and clearly stated goals, according to A. Lorri Manasse, former associate in educational policy and organization at the National Institute of Education.

"The importance of this personal vision or image of the school as a whole is a recurring theme in studies of effective principals," she wrote in *The Principal* magazine. This requires, she said, the skills to guide the teaching staff in identifying problems the school faces and in formulating solutions and the political and managerial skills to make the plans succeed.

What this denotes is a take-charge attitude, a belief by the principal that he or she can shape the school situation to his or her liking, as Arthur Blumberg and William Greenfield put it. In their book, *The Effective Principal,* they identified three main leadership qualities that produced on-the-job success for the principals they studied. These successful principals were:

1. Eager to make their schools over in their own image.
2. "Proactive" and quick to assume the initiative in directing their schools.
3. Resourceful in focusing on their goals . . . by shaping the job and demands on their time accordingly.

In addition, the effective principals were able to avoid becoming "consumed by the organizational maintenance requirements of the job," Blumberg and Greenfield wrote. In short, these principals "did not allow themselves to become bogged down in 'administrivia.'"

Rather than ignoring administrative tasks, however, these principals "seemed to be able to satisfy them by using either a small portion of their personal time and energy or capitalizing on the capability of other personnel to meet these organizational demands," they wrote.

Other studies have shown that administrators who display the foregoing traits — clear-sightedness, confidence, efficient organization — also demonstrate another important quality: decisiveness.

Writing in the *NASSP Bulletin,* Donovan and Kathryn Peterson said: "Many decisions, probably most decisions, must be made in a matter of minutes. The ability to do so is termed 'decisiveness.'" Since principals are called upon to make so many decisions each day — both large and small — decisiveness is vitally important to their effectiveness, the Petersons said.

Leadership in Instruction

A summary of practical leadership skills focused on instruction was compiled by Daniel L. Duke, director of educational administration at Lewis and Clark College, Portland, Oreg.

Duke said in an article in the *NASSP Bulletin* that principals should concentrate on six areas:

- **People.** Principals should actively recruit teachers, furnish inservice activities on a continuing basis, and maintain a highly motivated faculty. "The development of an effective teaching staff has little to do with luck," Duke said.

Teachers should be involved in planning and executing inservice activities, he said. And motivation can come, he added, from treating teachers as if they were capable of exercising leadership and making them feel indispensable.

A Checklist: Is the Principal Providing Instructional Leadership?

__ Does the school have an articulated set of goals for the education of students?

__ Do the course offerings lead toward the accomplishment of the goals for each student?

__ Is there an appropriate sequence of skill or ability development which is responsive to differing student abilities, while still helping each student to achieve his or her potential?

__ Are learning activities based on staff understanding of the characteristics of physical, emotional, and psychological growth of students?

__ Are the necessary resources (e.g., materials, personnel) available to accomplish school goals?

__ Is there a formative or ongoing process of evaluation and planning which allows for continued improvement of the instructional program?

Source: **James L. Olivero, *The Principalship in California: Keeper of the Dream,* Association of California School Administrators**

- **Instructional support.** Principals, Duke said, should provide instructional support, including sound time management, record keeping, and classroom control designed to maintain an atmosphere of orderliness at the school and avoid distractions from classroom instruction.

Principals, he said, can use techniques to make faculty meetings efficient and productive, to minimize absenteeism among students and teachers, to involve parents in the resolution of school problems, and to help teachers refine classroom management skills.

- **Adequate resources.** Principals should make sure the school has adequate resources, such as learning materials, appropriate facilities, and skilled support personnel. Effective principals, Duke said, have learned how to cut through central office "red tape" to get what the school and teachers need, often cultivating close ties with superiors to learn of the availability of new resources before other principals do.

- **Quality control.** Principals maintain quality control of the instructional program through supervision, education, rewards, and sanctions of the teaching staff. Principals should convey high expectations of teachers, regularly remind them of school objectives, and evaluate their performance.

Student progress should be closely monitored through the use of test data, grades, classroom observations, and other information. To accomplish these tasks, principals should delegate at least some responsibility to assistant principals, department chairpersons, or teachers.

- **Coordination of activities.** Principals should coordinate the often numerous activities, programs, and functions of the school to assure that the various parts operate smoothly and reduce the burden on classroom teachers. For example, Duke said, principals should see to it that teachers and other instructional personnel, such as specialists, share information and plan together.

Other areas requiring coordination include school improvements, setting school rules, purchasing textbooks, developing curriculum goals, assigning homework, arranging teaching and classroom schedules, and scheduling extracurricular activities.

- **Problem solving.** Effective principals engage in troubleshooting to anticipate and solve problems. This can be done through regular departmental meetings, appointment of a formal or informal ombudsman, daily tours of the school, talks with students and staff members, routine briefings with assistants, and debriefing at the conclusion of the day or week.

Checklist: Personal Traits and Leadership Style of an Effective Principal

__ Sets an example
__ Is committed to quality
__ Works at good human relationships
__ Knows the community
__ Has a good mental attitude and physical stamina
__ Is committed to the staff and school
__ Compromises to get agreement
__ Maintains poise
__ Is able to handle stress
__ Creates a structure for things to happen
__ Admits mistakes
__ Doesn't take a conflict personally
__ Leads from a positive approach
__ Doesn't get too far ahead of the people he or she leads
__ Is available to people
__ Has an understanding family

Adapted from *The Senior High School Principalship, Volume 3,* National Association of Secondary School Principals

Note: Principals cannot separate out the purely "instructional leadership" tasks. They must attend as well to "internal management" tasks, including personnel selection, staff evaluation, communications, record keeping, holding meetings, serving on teams, forming building-level teams, and, of course, investigating and implementing innovations such as the use of microcomputers for instructional and administrative purposes.

Principal as Change Agent

In many cases, principals will be called upon to exercise leadership by initiating change aimed at prodding students and teachers to higher achievements. In *Of Principals and Projects* (Association of Teacher Educators, Reston, Va.), Spencer H. Wyant examined what made principals succeed when introducing new reading programs, curriculum reform, special education mandates, and community involvement projects.

Invariably, Wyant said, the principal was the main source of energy for the undertaking, and failure prevailed when that energy lagged or was lacking.

Effective management by the principal was also essential, Wyant found, and this was dependent on a good match between the principal's style and the expectations of teachers.

Wyant discovered that in successful projects, principals:

- Placed the main emphasis on curriculum, academic standards, and students, not administrivia.
- Maintained a clear focus on project goals.
- Provided reinforcement to teachers when it was called for.
- Performed supporting tasks such as acquiring resources, negotiating with the central office, and even preparing materials.

What also comes through in Wyant's book and other studies is that teachers like and want this kind of leadership from principals. "Teachers appreciated instances of the principal's initiative, whether they took the form of getting the project going or stopping by occasionally to ask how things were going," Wyant said.

An Inspirational Leader

Teachers, as well as many effective principals, believe that a principal must follow a cooperative approach to be a successful leader. Many principals and superintendents remarked in the questionnaires they completed for this report that a cooperative spirit was necessary to bring out the best in a teaching staff.

In its study of effective principals, NASSP found that these principals saw a direct relationship between their actions and faculty attitudes. The principals "exercise considerable influence over the atmosphere of their school by establishing the quality of human relationships and by building confidence and trust," the report said.

For some principals, this may mean a new orientation in working with teachers. "Principals may have been able to function as benevolent dictators in some past day," Gilbert R. Weldy wrote in *Principals: What They Do and Who They Are*, an NASSP monograph. "They may have prided themselves on mental toughness and decision-making ability, but that era has passed."

This is not to say that effective principals should not be strong individuals. They must be. But today's effective principals show strength through their ability to persuade teachers, students, and parents to move ahead *with* them and to inspire with enthusiasm and skill. That is the contemporary meaning of leadership in schools.

Obstacles to Leadership

The vast majority of principals face the same kind of obstacles, more or less. But those obstacles apparently loom large or small depending on the individual looking at them. Research shows that successful principals don't see them as very formidable. The NASSP report on effective principals, for example, found that the principals who were studied perceived "fewer administrative roadblocks and fewer constraints generally" than other principals.

Blumberg and Greenfield also concluded that effective principals believe they can influence situations in spite of all the handicaps that others might see. This self-confidence — or "interpersonal competence," as the authors termed it — was probably instrumental in making these principals effective.

Principals often bemoan the limits placed on their authority, but Van Cleve Morris and a team of investigators discovered that often just the opposite was the source of the principal's problems. "Complaints by principals about organizational procedures," Morris wrote in *The Urban Principal*, "are more likely to center on the vagueness of language and the lack of clearcut administrative direction than upon the rigidity and restrictiveness of 'tight' rules that provide too little administrative direction."

In reality, Morris added, this produces "considerable leeway" in the prerogatives of principals, although the leeway is almost always unstated and informal. Morris said his team was "struck ... by the lack of specificity in the (school) organization's rules" and the "considerable degree of principalship discretion built into the school district's administrative system."

Effective principals test limits, bend rules. Given the existence of discretionary authority, the potential for "pro-active" principals to become strong leaders is fairly obvious. A common theme in the research on principals, Manasse said, is that "effective principals have learned to lead within that work structure, to identify and use the discretionary authority they have, and to function within the larger organizational context in such a way that they expand their discretion."

In analyzing the personal traits of principals, Blumberg and Greenfield said "part of the character of principals who lead is that they seem to have a rather high tolerance for ambiguity" concerning both task and relationships. In other words, these effective principals are secure enough in "their sense of themselves as people" that they can not only function well within what Morris called "situational authority," but, more importantly, they can seize it as an opportunity for accomplishing their goals.

Perhaps it follows naturally, Blumberg and Greenfield said, that such principals "have a marked tendency to test the limits of both the interpersonal and organizational systems they encounter."

In practice, this meant that the principals "were willing and able to interpret rules in a manner that enhanced rather than reduced the effectiveness" of their schools. That was the finding of Daniel U. Levine and Joyce Stark in a study called *Instructional and Organizational Arrangements and Processes for Improving Academic Achievement at Inner City Elementary Schools* (Center for the Study of Metropolitan Problems in Education, University of Missouri, Kansas City; 1981).

"Many principals do not realize the extent of the power they exercise and the mediating influence, for good or for bad, which their words and actions have on their faculties. When the principal does not trust the faculty, then the faculty does not trust the principal, one another, students, or parents. When the principal is laissez-faire in supervision of the faculty, the faculty is less committed to either social or academic behavior standards for students. When principals exhibit a siege mentality — with fear of parents, students, teachers, or all of these groups — teachers mirror the same behaviors."

— Edgar A. Kelley
Improving School Climate

Often, they said, "rules and regulations were 'bent' to the point that they were mangled or broken." Another finding of the study: "Higher-level administrators generally seemed tolerant or even supportive of rule adaptations."

One principal referred to such rule-bending as "creative administration." Principals often bend rules to retain good teachers or to reward effective teachers with desirable assignments or special favors, Morris and associates found. Such principals also use their discretion to "balance interests of parent involvement and institutional autonomy" by molding expectations of parents, guiding and channeling their involvement in schools, and "rewarding and punishing" parents who ask the assistance of schools.

(Effective principals know that "hassling" those who come to them for help eventually will cause people to ignore them and to seek help elsewhere.)

In short, Morris said the principals in his study soon discovered "that 'going through channels' to remedy . . . shortages (in textbooks or other materials) is insufficient. Instead, they short-circuit the organizational labyrinth and, on their own, negotiate a textbook exchange with a fellow principal, or search out some extra curriculum guides in a closet at the district office, or personally track down a missing paycheck for a teacher. Only with an extra-bureaucratic maneuver can a principal keep the educational program of the school on schedule."

Sometimes principals see more obstacles than there are. Another facet of the principal's role in overcoming obstacles was explored by Seymour B. Sarason, who concluded that the leadership of principals may not be as limited by real roadblocks as by their own inaccurate perception of "the system" as intolerant of unorthodoxy.

In *The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change* (Allyn and Bacon, Boston; 1982), Sarason argued that the system is "frequently conceived by the individual in a way that obscures, many times unwittingly, the range of possibilities available to him or her." All too frequently, he said, the principal's conception of the system does not square with what the system in fact permits or would tolerate.

Observers note that some principals deliberately "play it safe" and "keep a low profile," eventually coasting out to retirement.

Instruction: The New Target

Instruction, rather than just managing the schools, is now the prime focus of expectations for leadership of principals.

In earlier days, the principal was viewed as an organization man or woman who coordinated all parts of the school operation. That still must be done, but the overwhelming consensus in and outside the profession is that instructional leadership takes precedence over everything else.

In the Critical Issues Surveys for this report, principals and superintendents both ranked instructional leadership as the most important role of principals today. When asked to state "the required skills for being an effective principal," however, superintendents listed instructional skills first while the principals put management skills on top.

In their comments on the questionnaires, principals included under management the skills to use time, resources, and personnel effectively so that the school could concentrate on the instructional program.

So the apparent discrepancy in the views of superintendents and principals may not be real, since instructional skills require management. Still, the contrast in answers given by the two groups may have turned up one legitimate difference in viewpoints. Superintendents commented that they felt principals needed to strengthen instructional skills while principals indicated their command of instructional skills could be taken for granted, but skills in other areas stand in need of strengthening.

Principals no longer have the option to decide whether or not to make instruction the top priority. "Principals really have no choice," said Gilbert R. Weldy, a principal himself, in the *NASSP Bulletin*. "In this period of declining student achievement, wavering public confidence in schools, and demands for financial accountability, principals must furnish instructional leadership whether they want to or not. If they don't know how, they must learn. If they don't have time, they must find time."

How?

The only question is *how* to be an effective instructional leader. Some of the general ways have already been discussed in this chapter. One other general approach was described by Seymour B. Sarason, who advocates turning the schools into an "idea place." By that, he means schools where teachers and principals are consistently discussing and thinking about the things that should matter most — education, teaching, and learning. One example: How the interests, problems, and characteristics of children should be reflected in and determine the school experience.

Many such topics could be listed, Sarason said, but the point is that education should pervade the school atmosphere as an active, evolving, collective endeavor.

Basics of Instructional Leadership

Perhaps the most important way for a principal to exert instructional leadership is to leave no doubt about school priorities. On this point, there is wide agreement among both researchers and practitioners.

"The principal must make everyone at the school very much aware of the importance he or she places on instruction," said Bill Heron, director of secondary education for the Gwinnett County Public Schools, Lawrenceville, Ga., in his reply to a survey for this report.

The same conclusion was reached by Jane Stallings and Georgea G. Mohlman in their study for the National Institute of Education, "School Policy, Leadership, Teacher Change, and Student Behavior in Eight Schools." They found successful principals exert "profound influence" on instruction through "clear, consistent, well communicated, collaborative, overall school policies."

A primary way to do this, Gilbert R. Weldy said, is to "constantly be an aggressive advocate for good teaching."

He characterized that role as follows:

> *"In no other area is the principal's influence felt more than in his insistence that every teacher be well prepared every day with interesting, challenging lessons and activities. The principal should be in classrooms observing teachers, offering support and suggestions. He or she should have an ongoing inservice program for improvement of the instruction in the school. This advocacy of good teaching may be the most important single influence the principal can have in providing students with a school that is a comfortable, exciting, stimulating, learning place."*

Studies of schools with effective instructional programs indicate they have a clearly defined mission of improving student achievement, according to the School Effectiveness Program of the Santa Clara County (Calif.) Office of Education. Its report, entitled *Defining the Principal's Role as Instructional Leader*, said that in effective schools:

> *"The emphasis is on fewer goals around which staff energy and other school resources can be mobilized. A few coordinated objectives, each with a manageable scope, seem to work best. A few clear objectives are not only easier to implement but also easier to communicate."*

Principals emphasize these goals, the study continued, by referring to them often, both formally and informally as well as through decisions made on key issues, such as staffing, budgeting, and staff development. Emphasis on the instructional mission gives a "sense of purpose to the activities" of everyone at the school.

The crucial point made in the report is this: By setting forth clearly, widely, and frequently the raison d'être of the school, the principal may signal a turning point for the school.

How Much Must Principals Know?

The key question about the principal's role as instructional leader may be this: How much must the principal know about instruction? Must he or she be an expert in virtually every phase of the instructional program, including the variety of subject matter covered in the typical school curriculum?

According to successful principals, the answer depends on what is meant by "expert." The ideal situation would be to have a principal who knows everything, but a person possessed of that kind of expertise is rare indeed. Finding enough principals of this caliber to staff the nation's schools would be difficult, if not impossible.

The fact is, it would be unrealistic to expect principals to know everything. There is simply too much to know, especially in junior and senior high schools where the subject matter is diverse and often complex. Nevertheless, to qualify as instructional leaders, principals should be experts of a kind.

Gilbert R. Weldy described the expected expertise this way:

> *"Although a principal cannot have specific knowledge of every curricular area taught in his school, his knowledge should at least embrace the general trends and movements within each subject area. He must have sufficient knowledge to understand and evaluate curricular innovations that are being tried in schools throughout the country. Some may be sound improvements developed under careful, professional supervision. Others may be narrow opinions by self-*

The Principal's Role in High-Achieving Schools

A review of research by Steven T. Bossert for the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, San Francisco, showed that effective principals in high-achieving schools tend to:

- **Emphasize achievement by setting instructional goals, developing performance standards for students, and expressing optimism about the ability of students to meet instructional goals.**
- **Devote more time to the coordination and control of instruction.**
- **Have more skill in instructional matters, observe teachers' work more, discuss work with teachers more often, and engage in more inservice and evaluation activities with teachers.**
- **Project more power than other principals, especially in decision making involving curriculum and instruction.**
- **Have influence in the mobilization of district support and involvement in the school's instructional plans.**
- **Foster structured learning environments with few disciplinary problems and buffer classrooms from interruptions by stressing discipline and relieving teachers of paperwork.**
- **Know community power structures and maintain appropriate relations with parents.**

interest groups, while still others may be gimmicks and would have no value. The principal needs the knowledge and ability to perceive the difference."

The principal "needs to be knowledgeable about curriculum and instruction but does not need to be a specialist in each (content) area," agreed Supt. Ronald Walton of the Monroe County Community Schools, Bloomington, Ind., in his response to the Critical Issues Survey. Supt. Darryl W. Stults of the Northeastern Wayne Schools, Fountain City, Ind., stressed, however, that principals need to "demonstrate knowledge of curriculum, be familiar with good teaching methods, provide professional guidance, achieve objectives, and plan program improvement."

Basic Principles Must Be Mastered. "It is true you can't expect principals to know everything," said Richard (Pete) Mesa, a former principal and now chief deputy state superintendent of public instruction for the California State Department of Education. But there are basic principles of learning and instruction that cut across all levels of schools, he said in an interview for this report, and these comprise the knowledge that is absolutely essential for principals to master.

On that point there is consensus among leading practitioners and researchers. In both elementary and secondary schools, these principles of learning apply. "The fact of the matter is that elementary teachers teach five or six subjects, too," Mesa pointed out.

The principles of learning identified by research involve effective methods of teaching for the most part. They are drawn from what is known about "how kids learn," Mesa said. He mentioned these examples: "to know that it is important to make clear what is taught and is presented in a graphic way with good examples . . . for teachers not to move on until a concept is understood . . . when to teach the whole class or individually."

When principals know these basics of learning and instruction, Mesa said, "they can help teachers improve, irrespective of the subject field. Development of skills can cut across disciplines, too," he said. For example, promoting the practice of writing in most classes or requiring training in the use of the library so students will learn to collect information, synthesize it, and develop their own conclusions.

The knowledge that principals should possess also includes instructional processes, said David P. Cavanaugh, a former principal and now superintendent of the Deer Park City Schools, Cincinnati, Ohio. He said principals should be familiar, for example, with learning styles so they can help teachers gear their delivery to the ways that children learn.

Principals need to "determine what good teaching is and learn how to recognize it in the classroom," said Paul Beilfuss, principal of Winkelman Elementary School, Glenview, Ill. As an example, he said principals should ask teachers: "What are you doing, why are you doing it, why did you choose that technique, did you think it through?" Asking these questions encourages teachers to move toward sound teaching practices — with the principal's support. In effect, Beilfuss said, the principal should be a "teacher of teachers."

To this extent, these practitioners agreed, principals should be experts.

Example: A Research-Based Program

A growing number of school districts are designing their instructional programs around a set of learning principles or teaching skills drawn from research. Although there is no single set of research-based principles that all or even most districts use, many common features can be found among the programs now being tried.

One system which includes most of those common features is the Program for Effective Teaching used by the Newport News (Va.) Schools.

All teachers, principals, and vice principals at both elementary and secondary levels are trained to use five basic instructional skills as the basis for classroom teaching, according to William Etheridge, director of staff development for the Newport News district.

Here is an outline of the five skills and the subskills followed by the district:

Skill 1: Preparation by teachers

A. Analyze the learning objective and content to be taught
   - Identify the terminal objectives
   - Determine possible interim learning steps
   - Eliminate nonessential steps
   - Make sure steps are in appropriate sequence, if necessary
   - Ask yourself questions to test whether the learning steps are appropriate

B. Analyze the learners
   - Use a diagnostic survey or pretest to deter-

mine the skill level of students
— Examine results to determine the appropriate level of difficulty in relation to the content objectives and learning steps
— Determine whether students should be taught as a class, in groups, or individually.

Skill 2: Teaching Process

A. Explanation: Method of imparting subject matter, such as lectures, charts, films, discussions
B. Question: Test the understanding of students
C. Activity: Practice, exercises, drills, discussion
D. Response: Teachers respond to students through positive reinforcement, corrections, or other behavior

Skill 3: Teachers monitor students and adjust teaching

A. Generate overt behavior: students demonstrate level of comprehension or mastery
B. Observe: Teachers record student behavior
C. Interpret: Teachers analyze reasons for behavior
D. React: Teachers adjust teaching according to interpretation of behavior

Skill 4: Focus students on learning process

A. Prepare students for teaching
  — Involvement: Directing students' attention to learning objective
  — Relevance: Relating subject content to past, present, or future life experiences of students
  — Statement: Description of learning objective
B. Elicit student participation
  — Stimulate thinking
  — Gain involvement through speaking, discussions, and having students ask questions
C. Conclusion
  — Involvement of class
  — Summary of what has been learned by students

Skill 5: Learning factors

A. Motivation
  — Comfortable feeling between teacher and student
  — Interest of student
  — Level of difficulty
  — Specific knowledge of results
  — Tension
  — Reward
B. Reinforcement
  — Positive
  — Negative or corrective
  — Neutral or no response
  — Regular or intermittent
C. Retention
  — Comfortable feeling between teacher and student
  — Degree of mastery at outset
  — Meaning or relevance to student
  — Practice: Regular, intermittent, in group, individually
  — Transfer of learning to other areas
D. Transfer
  — Identification of concept, principle, or generalization
  — Degree of mastery at outset
  — Identification of key elements

Etheridge emphasized that the five basic instructional skills and subskills are not necessarily used in sequential order. For instance, skills described under No. 2, 3, and 4 often overlap and are applied simultaneously, he said. The learning factors listed under No. 5 are basic principles that should constitute the framework for all aspects of the teaching process. In total, the skills that make up the Program for Effective Teaching embody the kind of knowledge about classroom teaching that principals should master and use to be effective instructional leaders.

Tip: Use others to put instructional skills into practice. Mesa, Cavanaugh, and Beilfuss said that as principals they were most successful in seeing these principles put into practice through department heads on the secondary level and through groups of teachers in elementary schools. They also practiced them through their own supervision of teachers.

Mesa warned that principals should not assume that department heads know these instructional skills. It may be necessary to train them as a first step. Then the department heads can work closely with individual teachers — if principals cannot do this themselves.

Cavanaugh said he saw greatest improvement when, as a principal, he inspired teachers with his enthusiasm and joined in learning a new process. When his school's faculty and administrative staff undertook to educate themselves about learning styles, he helped develop new materials, taught classes, and engaged in discussions with teachers on progress in incorporating the new techniques into classroom use.

Beilfuss used a "critical mass of people on the staff, 'the movers and the shakers,' who have strengths and want to get better." He named these teachers to an advisory council representing all grade levels. He planned instructional improvements with this council, which then took proposals to the general faculty for reaction.

"If you get this core group to go along," Beilfuss explained, "then others will get involved." The core group is able to meet on short notice and reach decisions much more quickly. It is trusted by the faculty, and its decisions are viewed as faculty decisions as a rule, he explained. The payoff for council members comes through satisfaction of their own needs for improvement as well as from recognition by the principal and the school.

Curriculum Coordination

A closely connected responsibility of instructional leadership involves what Mesa, Cavanaugh, and Beilfuss characterized as curriculum coordination. Researchers also have found that effective principals are able to coordinate, discuss, and advise on curriculum with teachers.

Mesa said this may be the most critical function of principals. By coordination, he means principals "looking at what teachers produce and whether it addresses the needs of kids; looking at curriculum and its objectives and determining whether it is well written or not; making sure what is in the curriculum is being taught; and determining if the subject matter content is appropriate."

In its study, the Santa Clara County (Calif.) Office of Education said principals should coordinate curriculum by ensuring that:

- Basic and supplemental materials used in their schools are consistent and mutually reinforcing.
- Curriculum content is consistent with instructional objectives and that it matches well with the tests used to measure mastery of those objectives.
- Curriculum content, sequence, and materials across grades are synchronized to produce a coherent and orderly progression of instruction.

The Principal as a Supervisor

Knowledge of instruction and curriculum on the part of principals is not enough, of course. Principals must work closely with teachers in classrooms through direct observation of the teaching process and supervision of teaching behavior. Principals must be capable of directing department heads or others to perform this function.

Here is the way Gilbert Weldy sees it:

> *"One of the primary responsibilities of a principal is supervising the faculty. He observes teaching in his school regularly to be intimately aware of what kind of teaching is going on; he knows the strengths, weaknesses, styles, idiosyncracies of his staff. In observing teachers, the principal has the responsibility to compliment the accomplished, support the inexperienced, counsel with the specialists, and correct or eliminate the incompetent. In his role as supervisor of the instructional program, the principal is a skilled observer, evaluator, and adviser to teachers."*

Supervision is necessary, researchers say, because it provides teachers with feedback as they apply their instructional skills. Principals who do not supervise teachers still must oversee the process and be knowledgeable enough to make sure it is carried out competently.

Drawbacks

Although research shows supervision is one of the most important functions that results in effective teaching and student learning, researchers have also discovered that relatively few principals do much classroom supervision — even when the situation calls for it.

Why don't they? The consensus is that principals don't find the time because they feel uncomfortable supervising teachers.

In researching a forthcoming book, Dan Lortie, the University of Chicago sociologist, said principals find supervision of teachers one of the hardest things they do. For one thing, Lortie said, principals feel uncertain about their own knowledge of instruction, which makes them reluctant to tell others how to do it.

"It is difficult for them to be certain — in their minds — what is truly right or wrong in classroom practice," Lortie said. Sensing their uncertainty, teachers often resist the judgments of principals, who are inclined to agree when teachers argue that one pedagogical approach is as good as another. The situation is exacerbated by younger principals who feel uneasy trying to supervise veteran teachers, Lortie said.

These drawbacks to supervision by principals

Four Skills That Separate Effective from Ineffective Principals

The standard for determining whether principals and other professionals do a good job has "moved from attitudes and beliefs to performance skills," said Madeline C. Hunter, professor of education at U.C.L.A., before the 1982 convention of the National Association of Elementary School Principals.

Four general performance skills, she said, separate an effective principal from a "well meaning but not as effective" principal. They are:

Skill #1: Continuing to grow and learn. "After five years [on the job], you're going to be as good as you're ever going to be unless there is outside intervention.

"You and I need to demand that we are taught how to improve school climate, to do curriculum mapping, to do these things and keep ourselves growing ... [We] need to push hard to insist on this . . . as part of our job."

Skill #2: Understanding the process of instruction. "As the principal, you have to become literate in instructional analysis. It takes about 30 hours of training to be able to look at any episode of teaching and identify what that teacher is doing that is promoting learning . . . and what is actually interfering with learning.

"This is the essence of instructional knowledge: where you see that your teachers have the opportunity to learn how to use the chalkboard, to use transfer theory, to eliminate most — never all — of the discipline problems, and to identify the critical attribute of something so that the student knows in every situation when that rule applies and when it doesn't. All of that is knowledge that is available now. For example, we've now translated the intuitive skill of using a chalkboard effectively into words and principles."

Skill #3: Becoming curriculum leaders. "It does no good to teach exquisitely that which is not worth the effort. Because knowledge is exploding, we have to be curriculum experts [and] we are having to pick and choose. Our selection criterion will have to be which parts of the curriculum have more transfer value. For example, there's more transfer value to teaching U.S. history [as opposed to other history] because it is closer to home ... As instructional leaders, you have to make sure that what the teacher is teaching is taught for transfer because there's no way to teach it all anymore. So you must be curriculum leaders."

Skill #4: Sharpening communication. "Communication skill means the person is going to hear, understand, and listen to you. Our No. 1 communication job is with teachers — to help them constantly escalate teaching effectiveness. We principals are accountable for seeing that whatever is learned in inservice is translated into the classroom.

"The second group with whom we must communicate is our students. We have to develop a common vocabulary . . . not only so the students understand what we mean but so they are able to communicate with us.

"A third and critically important group is parents. They are not trusting of us because they are not sure what we're saying ... Parents have to know why we're doing what we're doing. . . [For example] a child makes contact by going up and socking somebody. His parents get a note saying, 'Your child is using unacceptable social approaches'. . . The parent says, 'I don't know what the hell you're talking about.'

"The fourth group is the central office . . . We principals have to communicate with that central office so they understand what we're doing, what we need.

"The last group is our legislators, our school boards — the policy makers . . . who have direct, mandatory power over us. They need to understand what it is we need and why we need it . . . We have to learn to talk with the 'power people' so they see our point of view."

are rooted in their background, said Robert H. Anderson, dean of education at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Tex. "Principals are former teachers themselves and have built-in negative feelings about being in the classroom and bothering the teacher — a tradition of resistance with which even the principal is somewhat sympathetic," Anderson said.

Obviously, sound knowledge of research findings on instructional skills and curriculum development along with training in their use in classrooms will overcome much of this reluctance of principals who feel poorly equipped to supervise teachers.

Principals also must believe that supervision is designed not to "bother" teachers, but to improve their effectiveness for the sake of students, according to Ben M. Harris, professor of educational administration, University of Texas at Austin.

Harris said in *Principal* magazine that the dilemma for principals is this: "How do I sit down eyeball-to-eyeball with teachers I respect and appreciate in many ways when, having been in their classrooms and watched them in action, I realize they have some real needs for further professional growth?" The challenge, he said, "is to face these teachers in a constructive manner with the fact that, as good as they are and as much merit as there is in what they're doing, there's still improvement to be made." In other words, he added, principals should be confident that through supervision, instruction can improve.

Monitoring objectives: not to be overlooked. Another purpose of instructional supervision, according to a study by the Santa Clara County (Calif.) Office of Education, is to ensure that classroom objectives are being connected to school curriculum and objectives.

"This is where instructional management often breaks down — because of an absence of a relevant monitoring system based upon those objectives to be taught," said William Cox, assistant superintendent for instructional services in the Newport News schools. School goals may look great on paper, but unless they are carried out in classroom practice, they become meaningless. This key aspect of accountability can be controlled directly by principals.

The term often used to describe oversight of the teaching process by principals is "clinical supervision." It simply means "observing systematically in the classroom, sitting down with the teacher and analyzing the information that has been gathered (by the principal), and then trying to help the teacher rethink what is going on and replan for something better," Harris said.

Principals, he added, should keep in mind that other people and resources can and should be used in clinical supervision. Some ideas: assistance from a district or outside consultant, a demonstration, a visit to another school to observe other teachers, or attendance at workshops.

"It's sometimes necessary for a teacher to have new kinds of experiences not gained readily within the confines of that building, classroom, or group of students," Harris said. And if principals take part in these experiences, they can gain knowledge to be applied later in supervision.

The Newport News schools use a clinical supervision plan involving seven basic steps, said Cox. In sequence, they are:

1. Observe the lesson and record it anecdotally, being careful to note the teacher behavior and student response to that behavior.
2. Label the parts of the lesson using the terms of the district's instructional skills program.
3. Analyze the anecdotal record for strengths and weaknesses in the teaching art.
4. Rank a teacher's strengths and weaknesses following a conference with the teacher.
5. Plan the conference, establishing objectives and strategies for what needs to be accomplished.
6. Conduct the conference as if teaching a lesson, involving the teacher in the analysis of the lesson.
7. Follow up by clearly establishing the areas in which the teacher should strive for improvement; set up another observation and conference after the teacher has had a reasonable time to revise his or her methods.

School Climate

Another major area of instructional leadership — in addition to defining the school's mission and managing the instructional program — involves the school climate. It is an important responsibility of the principal because it sets the tone for everything else, said Supt. Gordon L. McAndrew of Columbia, S.C. "The climate of a school is the measure of that leadership," he wrote in *Daedalus*. "It cannot be assumed by anyone else."

Supt. Jay B. Taggart of the Weber County Schools, Ogden, Utah, said in his response to the Critical Issues Survey that a principal must lead "by creating a proper climate for learning; everything else follows."

Major Functions of Instructional Leadership by Principals

__ Frame school goals and objectives
__ Develop and promote high expectations of students
__ Establish and promote high academic standards
__ Assess and monitor student performance
__ Protect instructional time
__ Acquire strong knowledge of curriculum and instruction
__ Coordinate curriculum
__ Promote and support instructional improvement
__ Supervise and evaluate instruction
__ Create a productive work environment or climate

Source: *The School Effectiveness Program*
Santa Clara County (Calif.) Office of Education

What is school climate? A practical definition is offered by Edgar A. Kelley in *Improving School Climate*, published by NASSP.

Kelley put it this way:

> *"Some schools are cheerful and hum with excitement and purpose. Others seem to lack enthusiasm. Some classrooms are alive with expectancy. Others appear moribund. Some people who work and study in schools see each new day and each new person as opportunities for improving their understanding of the world around them. Others fear that today will be worse than yesterday. These feelings of satisfaction and productivity constitute school climate."*

Others have described school climate in terms of the "personality" of the school or the collective morale of its inhabitants. "The principal must lead in the establishment of a humane climate in which learning is accomplished through morale and motivation," said Supt. Ray E. Kilmer of the Lewis-Palmer School District No. 38, Monument, Colo., in his response to the Critical Issues Survey.

Essentially, school climate permits and encourages effective classroom instruction to take place. Although past descriptions of school climate recognized the inherent academic goal, current descriptions emphasize the importance of school climate as a means to instructional ends.

Indicators of a Good Climate

If you were to walk into a school building and try to sense its prevailing climate, what would you look for?

The following factors were cited by Robert S. Fox and his associates in *School Climate Improvement* (Phi Delta Kappa, Bloomington, Ind.; 1973):

- Respect by students, teachers, and administrators for themselves and others.
- Trust or confidence that others can be counted on to behave honestly.
- High morale or a good feeling about what is happening in the school.
- Opportunities for everyone to contribute ideas.
- Continuous growth by students in terms of instructional, social, and physical skills as well as increased knowledge and healthy attitudes.
- Cohesiveness or a feeling of being a part of the school.
- Improvement projects that keep the school growing, developing, and changing to meet new conditions, challenges, and goals.
- Caring or a feeling that people are concerned about each other.

Principal's Role in Improving Climate

Put simply, "the principal must develop self-esteem and pride in his school," Supt. Edward L. Phillips of the Iroquois School District in Erie, Pa., said in his reply to the survey for this report. "He is the change agent. Good morale and discipline will follow."

The principal is responsible for taking the lead in improving climate through a plan of action, some researchers point out. For example, Fox and his associates suggest that the principal follow these steps in establishing and carrying out such a plan:

- Assess the school climate.

- Set goals to describe needed improvements.
- Reduce goals to manageable projects with measurable objectives.
- Devise strategies for attaining the objectives.
- Implement these strategies.
- Evaluate progress by establishing checkpoints and periodically monitoring achievements.
- Improve each project in light of their evaluation.

What the principal does to improve the school climate must have its primary impact on teachers' perceptions, intentions, and behaviors, said Edgar A. Kelley in *Improving School Climate*.

To this end, Kelley advised principals to use these steps for altering teachers' behaviors:

1. State expected outcomes.
2. State expected behaviors on the part of the teachers as a means of achieving intended outcomes.
3. Determine whether teachers understand and share in the expectations that have been established.
4. Secure necessary support services so that teachers are able to implement behaviors aimed at accomplishing the expectations.
5. Supervise teacher performance of expected behaviors.
6. Provide feedback about teacher behaviors and about progress toward attainment of expectations.
7. Collect feedback from teachers and others to determine how well goals were attained and whether the principal was helpful in the accomplishment of intended behaviors and outcomes.

An example: If the reduction of disciplinary problems is the goal, the principal should begin by defining precisely what the objective is, e.g., a drop in disciplinary referrals by teachers, a reduction in referrals by the school to other agencies, an improvement in perceptions of disciplinary problems by parents, or some other measure.

The principal should collect information on the extent of disciplinary problems for the past three to five years. Also, he or she should determine through surveys or other methods the level of concern about the problem among teachers, parents, students, and others.

Armed with this data, the principal can state the objective and decide the basis for determining how to measure progress toward goals.

In establishing teacher behaviors aimed at achieving the goals (step 2 above), a multiple approach is advisable, Kelley said. Teachers could be allowed to select from recommended behaviors, or the actions could be mandated.

"Having a variety of options available for teacher performance and growth is likely to increase teacher commitment to the task," Kelley said. A variety of options also accommodates the differences in knowledge and skill among faculty members.

Collaboration: A Way To Improve Climate

One recurring theme in the research and comments by practitioners is that school climate depends heavily on the ability of principals to work with teachers toward instructional goals. The term most frequently used is "collaboration."

David P. Cavanaugh, a former principal and now a superintendent, said the most important skill a principal needs is "to be able to work with and through people." The strengths needed, he said, are in communication, problem solving, and delegating according to people's interests and abilities. "The principal can't do it all, so he or she has to work well with others," Cavanaugh said.

Several studies found that success of school programs depended on the involvement of teachers in the planning process. Jane Stallings and Georgea Mohlman, for example, discovered a number of powerful links between the principal's relationship with teachers and positive school factors. They were:

- Students were absent less often in schools where the policies were collaboratively developed, were clear, and were well communicated and consistently enforced.

- Teacher morale was significantly related to the principal being respectful, collaborative in making rules, and providing clear, consistent, and well communicated policy.

- In schools where meetings between principals and teachers were more frequent, interactive, and productive, teacher morale was higher and students misbehaved less, were on task more, and attended school more.

Reinforcing Standards: A Way To Improve Climate

A concrete way the principal can influence the climate is to establish academic standards and incentives for student learning, according to a research study by the Santa Clara County (Calif.) Office of Education.

Specifically, principals can promote a more effective learning climate by ensuring that teachers and students have clear guidelines concerning the school's rules and policies on promotion, homework, absenteeism, tardiness, and grading, the study concluded.

Also, principals should not leave to teachers the task of rewarding students for academic accomplishment. Principals can develop schoolwide incentives such as honor rolls, honor societies, award ceremonies, certificates of achievement, and recognition through school publications of students who have performed well, the study said. These kinds of schoolwide activities promoting academic excellence require the principal's leadership, the study added.

Reducing Distractions: A Way To Improve Climate

Another important way principals can directly influence the school climate is by protecting instructional time. Mainly, this involves minimizing interruptions during class periods by tardy students, public address announcements, student visits to the office, and student absence from

Characteristics of a Good Evaluation Program

As part of their job of instructional leader, principals must use a fair, effective program of evaluating teachers. How can principals tell if theirs is such a program?

Following is a list of the characteristics of a good teacher evaluation program, as compiled by Harold McNally of the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee:

___ The purposes of the program are clearly stated in writing and are well known to the evaluators and those who are to be evaluated.

___ The policy and procedures of the program reflect knowledge of the extensive research related to teacher evaluation.

___ Teachers know and understand the criteria by which they are to be evaluated.

___ The evaluation program is cooperatively planned, carried out, and evaluated by teachers, supervisors, and administrators.

___ The evaluations are as valid and as reliable as possible.

___ Evaluations are more diagnostic than judgmental.

___ Self-evaluation is an important objective of the program.

___ The self-image and self-respect of teachers are maintained and enhanced.

___ The nature of the evaluation is such that it encourages teacher creativity and experimentation in planning and guiding the teaching/learning experiences provided children.

___ The program makes ample provision for clear, personalized, and constructive feedback.

___ Teacher evaluation is seen as an integral part of the instructional leadership role of the principal and of the program of inservice teacher development.

Note: For a complete treatment of this topic, see *Evaluating Educational Personnel* (American Association of School Administrators, 1801 N. Moore St., Arlington, Va. 22209; 1982; $11.95).

class for extracurricular activities or special programs.

Principals are in a unique position to enforce policies that discourage such distractions from the learning process. Instructional time can also be protected by encouraging teachers to start class on time and to teach until the end of the period. Overall, the principal can watch out for the little things that can collectively erode instructional time.

Making It Happen

What is the best way for the principal to be an instructional leader, use principles of effective instruction, and maintain a good school climate?

The answer: There is no best way to do it all.

The art of getting things done depends on the personal makeup of each individual occupying the principal's chair. As Lorri Manasse noted: "None of the research on principals has indicated there is any one most effective principal style."

The principles of effective leadership may endure, but what works best in getting those principles implemented will vary widely, say researchers and practitioners.

An NASSP study found that the main factor that characterized effective principals was "their diversity." Characteristics of strong leadership have been identified, the study pointed out, but the range within that pattern is very wide. "It is extremely doubtful," the NASSP study said, "that there is a single set of personal qualities or a unique leadership style that is effective for all situations."

Most experts in the field advise that people in positions of authority, such as principals, should develop their own style of leadership, one which feels comfortable and is effective for them. After all, the test of one's own personal style will undoubtedly be: "It works for me."

Who's affected most by the principal's style? Teachers. In numerous studies, teachers described principals as being supportive when they went out of their way to show they cared about teachers.

After studying eight high schools, Jane Stallings and Georgea Mohlman concluded that teachers who perceived their principals as supportive had higher morale, were more involved in their teaching, and had closer associations with other faculty members.

These are the things, they said, that "supportive" principals did:

- Went out of their way to help teachers solve problems.
- Set a good example by arriving early and working hard.
- Looked out for the personal welfare of teachers, such as doing them personal favors, staying after school to help with extra work, and providing necessary services.
- Used constructive criticism to help teachers do a better job.
- Shared new ideas with teachers.

By contrast, so-called "directive" principals:

- Made most of the decisions and then told teachers about the decisions.
- Made all class scheduling decisions.
- Scheduled work for teachers.
- Corrected teachers' mistakes overtly.
- Turned faculty meetings into "principal-report" meetings.
- Provided little or no involvement of teachers in preparing meeting agendas.

How does a principal go about choosing a leadership style? In his book, *Of Principals and Projects*, Spencer H. Wyant said an appropriate style not only must reflect the individual's personal preferences but also must match the expectations of those with whom he or she works.

Why? Style — defined as a consistent pattern of behaviors and roles when working with others — is really an image *as perceived* by those other people, Wyant said. In other words, a particular style can be highly satisfying to the principal but unfulfilling for others.

Wyant cited the case of principals with great capacity and with a need to influence others. "If their style of influence is controlling and dominating others, they usually do not elicit more than minimum compliance from subordinates," he wrote.

"If their style is one of involving others, finding responsibilities to match interests and capabilities, and generally 'pulling' rather than 'pushing' others, it can be a very productive style."

Thus, individuals must be acutely aware of how their style affects their own feelings and the feelings of others around them.

A number of questionnaires are available, Wyant said, for principals who want to determine which style is most appropriate for them. These instruments are contained in: *Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources, Third Edition* (Paul Hersey and Kenneth

A Good Principal Can Turn a School Around in Two Years

"If you show me a good principal — by good, meaning efficient, effective, and excellent — I'll show you good teachers."

That is the conclusion of Madeline C. Hunter, professor of education at U.C.L.A. and a well known teacher trainer. The conclusion is based, she said, on research projects in which a "fine" principal was put in charge of a failing school — "failing in terms of discipline, parent cooperation, vandalism, test scores, teacher morale, or anything at all."

At the end of the first year of the new principal's tenure, she said, "you could see a perceivable difference. At the end of the second year, you had a different school."

Why? Hunter replied: "Every orchestra plays better with different directors; actors act better with different directors; teams become champions because of the ability of the coach to bring out the very best in somebody."

The same principle applies when an effective principal takes over a school.

H. Blanchard; Prentice-Hall; 1977); *The Human Organizations* (Rensis Likert; McGraw-Hill; 1977); *Everybody Wins: Transactional Analysis Applied to Organizations* (Dorothy Jongewood; Addison Wesley; 1974); *The Leadership Behavior of School Superintendents* (Andrew W. Halpin; Midwest Administration Center, University of Chicago; 1959); and *The Second Handbook of Organization Development in Schools* (R. A. Schmuck, P. Runkel, and J. Arends; Mayfield Publishing Co.; 1977).

A Plus for Instruction: Chairpersons

An important aspect of instructional management involves the principal's use of department or grade chairpersons to work with the faculty. Besides enhancing the effectiveness of the principal and the school, the use of chairpersons is an under-used way of rewarding outstanding teachers without promoting them to jobs outside the classroom.

The principal may plan to improve the instructional program through chairpersons, but the method of selecting these people may determine the success of that plan, says Robert Free, principal of Mesa (Ariz.) High School.

He believes that an open process in which teachers are intimately involved in selecting department chairpersons will breed a new commitment from teachers and encourage faculty leadership. Participation in the selection process gives teachers a stake in the success of the person serving in the role and in his or her goals, Free pointed out in an article in the *NASSP Bulletin*. Free faced a situation that many other principals may share: The department chairperson at his school had been appointed virtually for life by a previous principal and without involvement of other teachers.

Free changed that. He announced that the head of the English department was retiring and that he needed the advice of the faculty to draw up guidelines and a selection procedure. Several teachers volunteered to serve on an advisory committee.

The committee was formed, and these guidelines were adopted:

- The tenure of the chairperson would be from three to five years, depending on the wishes of the person in the position.
- The selection committee would be composed of three teachers from the department, one teacher outside the department, and two assistant administrators.
- Although the principal would be a nonvoting member of the committee, he would have the power of veto if he believed that he would be unable to work with the person selected by the committee. In that event, he would select the committee's second choice.

When the guidelines were announced, several teachers volunteered, and the advisory committee named the teachers to serve on the selection committee.

The selection committee members met with the retiring chairperson to discuss the role and studied the district's list of duties for chairpersons. This helped them gain a broader perspective of the job, Free said. They developed six questions — with the help of the district personnel office — to be asked of each candidate.

Then, the names of the candidates were submitted, and each was given a 30-minute interview. After the interviews were completed, and before any discussion, each committee member ranked the candidates. No discussion was permitted, to guard against lobbying among committee members for candidates. The selection was made from the vote results.

The principal met with all candidates, discussed their interviews with the committee and told them of the selection, which was announced promptly.

Free said participants applauded the openness of the process and they welcomed the chance to aspire to a position formerly all but closed to them.

In retrospect, Free said a list of qualifications for chairperson, including educational preparation and experience, would be desirable. Although such qualifications will likely make access more restrictive, a position of leadership should have some prerequisites, he added.

Another method of selecting department or grade chairpersons is designed to pick officeholders who have the characteristics of good change leaders.

Developed by J. Harvey Littrell, professor of curriculum and instruction at Kansas State University, Manhattan, this method could be used whether the principal or a selection committee appoints the person.

Littrell said in an article in the *NASSP Bulletin* that "individuals who can best help others to make change" have these characteristics:

- They are considered by colleagues to have good judgment.
- Their ability is seen as being only slightly better than that of colleagues.
- They are "early adopters" of innovation rather than innovators.
- They have information sources outside the school.

Littrell proposed using a questionnaire to be distributed among teachers which is aimed at identifying colleagues with the desired characteristics, e.g., the ability to help others with instructional problems.

The first questions, Littrell said, should ask teachers to name two colleagues who can "help in

Skills, Training, and Background Needed

The Critical Issues Survey for this report asked: "What types of skills, training, and background does an effective principal need to fulfill the role of instructional leader?"

Here's how superintendents and principals answered that question:

Superintendents	
Instructional expertise	40%
Formerly a good teacher	28%
Personal relations	22%
Management	20%
Advanced study or training	17%
Communications	17%

Principals	
Personal relations	45%
Instructional expertise	40%
Formerly a good teacher	33%
Communications	15%
Evaluation	13%

Skills Needed by Effective Principals

The Critical Issues Survey for this report asked this question: "What are the required skills for being an effective principal today?"

Here's how superintendents and principals responded to the question:

Superintendents	
Instruction	45%
Management	37%
Communications	34%
Personal relations	34%
Leadership	17%

Principals	
Management	76%
Personal relations	53%
Communications	49%
Leadership	29%
Instruction	25%

solving your problems and making changes in your procedures." Follow-up questions should try to determine if the persons named on the questionnaire measure up to the other personal characteristics and criteria. Littrell included in his article suggested ways to analyze the answers on the questionnaires and to draw up a master list from which chairpersons can be selected.

One Principal's Story

Michael P. Stevens was principal of Columbia High School in West Columbia, Tex., when the conflicting roles he played turned into a crisis of self-doubt.

Stevens said in an interview for this report that the time demands of the job became overwhelming and that he began to "question whether or not I was suited for the job."

The biggest demand on his time, Stevens said, came from the community's expectations that he attend all school functions, including athletic events, and that he be available at all times to deal with their questions or problems. This frequently meant getting telephone calls at home.

Stevens also experienced heavy demands for developing courses that fit the needs of students and the prolonged task of making staff assignments and designing class schedules. A major commitment of time went to personnel problems, such as handling supervision and evaluation of teaching faculty, and trying to hire good teachers and motivate others, he said. He also had to find time for discipline problems, special education requirements, and budgetary details.

Stevens began to feel that "the expectation that a person can retain the drive and vitality necessary to make worthwhile changes in a school and community may be unreasonable." He also began to realize that "over a period of time the drive to be the 'instructional leader' is replaced by the very basic survival instincts — just trying to

---

How Principals and Superintendents View Instructional Leadership

Here are some views from principals and superintendents who responded to the surveys for this Critical Issues Report:

Instructional leadership means "keeping abreast of latest developments in the field, conveying new ideas to teachers, making new materials available to teachers, experimenting with new instructional approaches, and resisting parental pressure to include everything in the curriculum." — Anonymous principal.

Instructional leadership is "knowing what is to be taught, how and if it is being taught, being able to give assistance where necessary, doing actual teaching in each grade level on a regular basis to keep up with instruction, and getting to know students better." — Earlene Holland, Principal, 10th St. School, Jasper, Ind.

Instructional leadership "presumes that the principal is in the first instance a 'good teacher' and therefore is capable of knowing how to recognize good teaching and take the leadership role in establishing good instruction throughout his attendance center." — L. Wayne Krula, Superintendent, School District No. 289, Mendota, Ill.

"Principals must be knowledgeable generally in a plethora of instructional disciplines and latest approaches. They must motivate by example, by suggestions, and their leadership skills to keep the curriculum and staff current with the 'state of the art.'" — Lynwood P. Harriman, Superintendent, Fairhaven (Mass.) Public Schools.

"The instructional leader of the school sets the tone in that school for the business of educating children. This person must understand curriculum development, staff development, public relations, and the business end of education." — Kevin C. Brummer, Superintendent, Bassett (Nebr.) Grade School District No. 74.

survive day to day."

Stevens began to question the idea of trying to set worthwhile objectives "when the demands on your time will not allow you to accomplish your goals." He said he felt that he was reduced to performing administrative tasks, without time to get involved in curriculum.

Stevens began to dig out of his dilemma in 1982, his third year at Columbia, before he left to become superintendent of the S and S Consolidated School District, Sadler, Tex.

The key, he said, was sharing the burden of the job with others. "The principal must free himself to delegate responsibility. I had to learn to do it," he said. Stevens began to use his two assistant principals more often to attend school functions, and one was given the job of developing and overseeing the school's master class schedule.

Another important approach that was useful to Stevens was to "allow myself to back off and relax" from the pressures of the job.

Then he adopted a "positive reinforcement system with teachers" to reward good efforts. It was a "reward system" for both him and the teachers.

By the time he left, Stevens added, he had also established an effective system for using department chairpersons to help with instructional responsibilities.

Secretary Bell Speaks Up for Principals

A National Institute of Education study examined what were identified as some of the most effective schools in the country to determine what makes the difference between effective and ineffective schools.

The findings, as summarized by Secretary of Education T. H. Bell: "The one element that has come through is that the school principal is the key.

"That may surprise some people," he said. "It doesn't surprise me. Effective schools have dynamic principals who spend most of their time on teaching and learning and not on the management aspects of schools. I think we have to emphasize how important the principal is."

Chapter IV

The Principal as Manager

Although this Critical Issues Report focuses on the principal's role in instructional management, there is clearly more to managing a school than simply making sure teachers are doing a good job and students are learning.

Principals cannot ignore their administrative responsibilities. They remain vitally important.

Principals and superintendents who responded to the survey for this report listed management skills as among the most important "for being an effective principal today." Specifically, principals ranked management skills first, and superintendents placed them second.

In their comments, principals and superintendents defined management skills as the ability to run a school, to organize people and resources, to use good human and public relations techniques, and to utilize effective communications with various audiences (e.g., parents, faculty).

Much of what is called management revolves around the instructional mission, affecting instruction in numerous indirect ways. Accordingly, some experts point out that managerial and instructional activities are intertwined, and the distinction between them should not be overdrawn.

"Promoting positive instructional outcomes requires school management decisions on a wide variety of school practices" based on student learning goals and an expert evaluation of factors that contribute to good teaching, noted A. Lorri Manasse, formerly an associate in educational policy and organization with the National Institute of Education (NIE).

Good management practices, she added, also generate and sustain commitment by students and teachers to the learning goals and send important signals to the public about those priorities. So, in many ways, she said, "the distinction between managerial and instructional activities may be artificial."

What Skills Are Needed?

Ask a principal what skills are needed for effective management of a school and the answer may go something like this:

> *"Patience, the ability to communicate to diverse groups of people, flexibility, common sense, an awareness of child development and child psychology, pride, a tough skin, and a sense of humor."*

That is the description given by Francis J. Grates, principal of Cuba (N.Y.) Elementary School, in his reply to the survey for this report.

Other principals and superintendents listed over 30 categories of skills that go into management, including, as several noted, the stamina to work long hours. The reason is not hard to find: Principals are being told to pay attention to instruction first but, at the same time, to carry out administrative duties.

The only impediment to being a successful principal, said R.L. Calabrese, principal of Granby (Mass.) High School, is "the limit of 24 hours in a day." Even that, he said, should not limit the effectiveness of a "positive, forward-looking principal."

Managerial Responsibilities

There are many managerial tasks that principals must perform, or else, as one educator pointed out, "they'll fall flat on their face as 'instructional leaders.'"

Specifying all of these tasks is difficult. They vary from school to school and from district to district, depending on the size of the school and the district, the number of support personnel assigned to a building, district philosophy about management responsibilities, and other factors.

The number and variety of these tasks can be awesome, as shown in the following breakdown of job responsibilities for principals, as developed by George B. Redfern (and included in his book, *Evaluating Teachers and Administrators: A Performance Objectives Approach;* Westview Press, Boulder, Colo.):

Organization and Administration

- Observance of district responsibilities
- Handling of confidential information
- Use of research findings
- Engaging in short- and long-term planning
- Delegation of responsibility and authority to subordinates
- Record-keeping practices
- Accuracy and timeliness of reports
- Decision-making techniques
- Holding one's self accountable for performance
- Facilitating change
- Skill in organization
- Knowledgeability in leadership theory
- Leadership practices
- Skill in development of subordinates

Communications Management

- Interpretation of district policies and programs
- Awareness of concerns and views of the community
- Responsiveness to inquiries and questions from constituents
- Keeping colleagues aware of developments in areas of responsibility
- Maintaining open, two-way communication
- Promoting climate for staff interaction
- Communication skills
- Regard for others
- Participation in district public relations program

Personnel Management

- Participation in employment of personnel
- Contributions to employee inservice programs
- Evaluation of personnel for whom responsible
- Recommendations for additions, promotions, demotions, retentions, transfers, and terminations of personnel
- Participation in employee relations activities
- Motivating subordinates
- Stimulating high morale
- Orientation of new employees
- Availability to staff members
- Sensitivity to needs of staff members
- Participation in team management

Management of Students

- Promotion of health, safety, and welfare of students
- Administration of attendance
- Handling of student behavior problems
- Management of student records
- Observance of rights and responsibilities of students
- Utilization of services of pupil personnel specialists
- Drawing upon resources of community social services
- Administration of district discipline policies and procedures
- Handling of suspensions and expulsions
- Supervision of extracurricular activities

Management of Instruction

- Up-to-dateness in curriculum development
- Helping to establish systemwide instructional objectives
- Facilitation of teaching and learning
- Promotion of programs to meet individual differences
- Assisting students and teachers to attain instructional objectives
- Providing resources, materials, supplies, and facilities to achieve objectives of instructional program
- Building an instructional climate conducive to learning
- Using evaluative data to design instructional strategies
- Promoting staff development to improve instruction
- Performance as a resource person to instructional staff
- Participation in the development of instructional goals
- Assistance in the evaluation of instructional programs
- Monitoring modifications in ongoing instructional objectives

Management of Services

- Food services program
- Custodial services
- Health care services

- Maintenance services
- Care of school property
- Student transportation
- Safety practices

Management of Facilities

- Keeping up-to-date inventories
- Recommending repairs and replacements of equipment
- Identification of new item needs
- Adherence to district policies regarding use of school facilities
- Contributions to upkeep of buildings and grounds
- Care of physical facilities and school property

Financial/Business Management

- Collection of moneys, maintenance of financial records
- Participation in formulation of district budget
- Making realistic estimates of financial needs
- Adherence to established guidelines governing expenditures of funds for goods and services
- Observance of cost-effectiveness in budget management

Professional Competencies and Improvement

- Sensitivity to need to grow professionally
- Up-to-dateness in area(s) of specialization
- Participation in additional graduate training
- Participation in development activities
- Contributions to districtwide inservice training activities
- Allocation of time to professional development

A more general version of the managerial responsibilities of principals was offered in a report to NIE by Gary Yukl of the State University of New York at Albany.

He said the primary functions of principals as managers are to:

- Develop goals, policies, and directions.
- Organize the school and design programs to accomplish these goals.
- Monitor progress, solve problems, and maintain order.
- Procure, manage, and allocate resources.
- Create a climate for personal and professional growth and development.
- Represent the school to the district office and the community.

Actually, Yukl said, principals perform in dual roles both as front-line supervisors and as middle managers.

As supervisors, they need to "maintain smooth, orderly operations by monitoring subordinate activities, solving problems, handling disturbances, and maintaining discipline."

As middle managers, Yukl added, they need to "develop subordinates professionally, to delegate considerable discretion and responsibility, and to oversee the implementation of new programs.

"Both roles are essential," Yukl added, "but innovation and bold initiatives occur only rarely, whereas routine administration and disturbance handling are daily responsibilities from which there is no escape."

The key to fulfilling both roles, he said, is to master the routine of administration so that "more time is devoted to important but neglected functions such as planning and organizing, subordinate development, and team building."

Managerial Behaviors

What managerial behaviors are exhibited by effective principals in carrying out their multiple roles? Yukl offered this list:

Performance emphasis: An effective principal emphasizes the importance of performance and encourages subordinates to make maximum efforts.

Role clarification: An effective principal informs subordinates of their duties and responsibilities, clarifies rules and policies, and lets subordinates know what is expected of them.

Training-coaching: An effective principal provides any necessary training and coaching to subordinates or arranges for others to provide it.

Goal setting: An effective principal, either alone or jointly with a subordinate, sets specific and challenging, but realistic, performance goals for each important aspect of the subordinate's job.

Planning: An effective principal plans in advance how to efficiently organize and schedule the work, coordinate school activities, accomplish task objectives, and cope with potential problems.

Innovating: An effective principal looks for new opportunities for the school to exploit, proposes new activities to undertake, and offers innovative ideas for strengthening the school.

Problem solving: An effective principal takes prompt and decisive action to deal with serious school-related problems and disturbances.

Time Management: A Critical Skill

Principals ranked time as the No. 1 impediment to being an effective leader in a survey for this Critical Issues Report. Superintendents placed it third after collective bargaining and personnel problems.

In response to the survey, Richard Warner, principal of Fargo (N.Dak.) South High School, cited the burden of "too many demands on my time and energy by too wide a variety of groups" as the main obstacle to effectiveness. "The expectation that the principal must be all things to all people is unrealistic," he added. Other principals and superintendents echoed similar sentiments.

Some principals suggested reductions in workloads as a way to eliminate a big roadblock to their success as leaders.

Others offered a different perspective, saying that while time demands are obviously great, the problem is more one of managing time well.

A "classical" approach to effective time management is described in *School Leadership: Handbook for Survival,* published by the Clearinghouse on Educational Management at the University of Oregon. Drawing on numerous studies on the topic, the report recommends these steps:

Step #1: Goal setting and prioritizing. The principal uses a written list or outline of professional goals to administer effectively.

After listing goals, the next step is to prioritize them to assure that important matters receive attention. The two or three most important goals should be expanded to include specific, short-term activities to accomplish the goals. Finally, the priorities should be reviewed to select the top goal and top activities which represent the most important thing that needs to be done in the school.

Step #2: A daily time log. Management consultants recommend that administrators keep some type of written daily log for at least a week in order to track their use of time. It may be divided into segments of 15 minutes, one hour, or longer. It could be pegged to changes in activities with the time recorded for each change.

Either at intervals or at the end of the day, the log should be evaluated. One idea is to categorize activities into groups labeled professional (e.g., curriculum planning), crisis (a student-teacher conflict), routine administrative (fire drill), and personal (calling home).

As a result of the evaluation, some principals may find they are spending too much time on nonprofessional activities that are unlikely to lead to improved instruction. If the log is filled with time-wasters (nonprofessional activities), the next step is to reduce them.

Step #3: Managing time-wasters. The main time-wasters for most administrators are visitors, telephone calls, meetings, paperwork, needs of colleagues — as well as the inability to say "no," to schedule and prioritize, to delegate, and to get on with whatever needs to be done (i.e., procrastination). Here's a rundown on each:

Visitors and telephone calls. The best approach is to schedule regular blocks of time to be inaccessible to visitors and telephone calls, except for emergencies. To make the idea work, coworkers must learn to respect those periods, and office assistants need to screen calls and visitors.

Meetings. These can be made more time efficient and productive through organizational and human relations techniques. The basic steps include (1) deciding on a compatible style for leading meetings, (2) planning the meeting based on goals and purposes of the leader and the meeting itself, (3) drawing up the agenda, (4) making arrangements for a meeting place and other details, (5) using the agenda to guide participants through problem solving and decision making, (6) maintaining good human relations among participants, (7) making sure responsibilities are clearly assigned and deadlines for action are set, and (8) following up on decisions made and evaluating the meeting's effectiveness.

Paperwork. To conquer paperwork, first have a secretary or assistant screen and categorize mail so it can be dealt with as action, information, or throw-away items. Action items with high priority can be answered quickly at a scheduled time of day. Low priority items can be set aside for attention later.

Paperwork should be delegated to assistants with notes as instructions. Routing slips, form letters, and other time-saving devices should be used when possible. A "suspense file" is useful to line up action items for future handling. For information items, a variety of filing systems should be used, ranging from one for the most used items to one that is tucked away for infrequently used items. Clean out files regularly. Learn to skim read or train an assistant for faster filing. Reroute reading matter to colleagues. Keep longer reading matter handy for time-fillers on trips.

Inability to say "no." Saying "no" is easier by first asking the question recommended by management expert Peter Drucker, "What would happen if this were not done at all?"

Most managers can dispose of one-quarter of their time demands with no significant effect, Drucker said.

Inability to schedule. This results from failure to use the skills of planning, ranking, clustering, and delegating. Daily planning should be accomplished first thing in the morning or last thing in the evening by making a "to do" list of the day's main tasks. The tasks then should be placed in priority order and coordinated with scheduled appointments so that a block of time is set aside for top ranked items.

Inability to delegate. This is common among all managers, often because of the attitude that it involves giving one's "dirty work" to someone else. Principals should delegate work that advances on-the-job training for the staff, tasks at which they are already skilled, or tasks at which others are more skilled. But principals should perform major tasks that further the school's primary purpose or goals.

Procrastination. This is professionally debilitating because it tends to delay the highest priority tasks while low priority items, oddly enough, are more often completed.

In *How To Get Control of Your Time and Your Life* (New York: New American Library, 1974), management expert Alan Lakein recommended antiprocrastination tactics, including setting deadlines and telling others of the deadlines, rewarding yourself as subtasks are completed, and making wise use of discretionary time.

If goals have been set and placed in priority order, completion of the time-saving steps will provide the discretionary time for concentration on those same goals — bringing an administrator full circle in the time management process. This discretionary time can also be called leadership time, or what Drucker termed "time for the right things."

In actual practice, the high school principals studied by Arthur Blumberg and William Greenfield used vice principals and administrative assistants with good success to carry out tasks.

"It should be obvious, too, just how important a secretary is in managing an administrator's time," commented one education professor. By confiding in, delegating to, and keeping in close communication with one's secretary, he said, a principal can literally make that person an administrative partner and, at the same time, make the job for principal and secretary more challenging.

Work facilitation: An effective principal provides subordinates with any supplies, equipment, support services, and other resources necessary to do their work effectively.

Monitoring operation: An effective principal keeps informed about the activities within the school and checks the performance of subordinates.

External monitoring: An effective principal keeps informed about outside events that have important implications for the school.

Information dissemination: An effective principal keeps subordinates informed about decisions, events, and developments that affect their work.

Discipline: An effective principal takes appropriate disciplinary action to deal with a subordinate who violates a rule, disobeys an order, or has consistently poor performance.

Representation: An effective principal promotes and defends the interests of the school and takes appropriate action to obtain necessary resources and support for the school from superiors, peers, and outsiders.

Consideration: An effective principal is friendly, supportive, and considerate in behavior toward subordinates.

Career counseling and facilitation: An effective principal offers helpful advice to subordinates on how to advance their careers, encourages them to develop their skills, and otherwise aids their professional development.

Inspiration: An effective principal stimulates enthusiasm among subordinates for their work and says things to build their confidence in their ability to successfully attain their objectives.

Praise-recognition: An effective principal provides appropriate praise and recognition to subordinates with effective performance and shows appreciation for special efforts and contributions made by subordinates.

Structuring reward contingencies: An effective principal rewards effective subordinate performance with tangible benefits such as pay increases, promotion, better assignments, better work schedules, or extra time off.

Decision participation: An effective principal consults with subordinates before making work-related decisions.

Autonomy-delegation: An effective principal delegates responsibility and authority to subordinates and allows them discretion in determining how to do their work.

Interaction facilitation: An effective principal emphasizes teamwork and tries to promote cooperation, cohesiveness, and identification with the school.

Conflict management: An effective principal discourages unnecessary fighting and bickering among subordinates and helps them settle conflicts and disagreements in a constructive manner.

> **"Teachers want to work with effective principals — administrators who not only assure the order, security, and maintenance of the school, but who also provide direction, leadership, and high standards for student and teacher success."**
>
> — Susan Moore Johnson
> *Creating Conditions for Effective Teaching*
> Center for Educational Policy and Management, University of Oregon

Florida Findings

Another summary of the managerial traits of effective principals comes from a study produced for the Florida Department of Education by McBer and Co. of Boston.

In analyzing the managerial traits of high performing principals of a group of elementary and secondary schools in Florida, the researchers came up with 14 competencies:

Sense of control. "Highly effective principals have a take-charge attitude and a sense of control over the fate of their schools."

Commitment to school mission. Effective principals were committed to trying repeatedly to correct problems. Everyone in the school was given a fair chance to improve, "but if a principal ever senses some danger to the welfare of the children, the children clearly come first."

Principals also demonstrated commitment to school mission, according to the researchers, by the importance they placed on fairness in treating youngsters — in terms of privileges, discipline, and program funding.

Monitoring. "Outstanding principals are vigilant. They monitor their schools by informally observing and interacting with staff and students." But besides simply being visible, they "strike out on tours with the express purpose of diagnosing conditions in their schools." They also are rigorous in gathering information on the causes of student performance problems, looking inside and outside the schools.

"The monitoring done by outstanding principals is an essential ingredient of sound decisions and the identification of problems before they escalate into crises," the researchers said.

Ability to recognize patterns. "Although all normal human beings engage in cause-and-effect thinking, outstanding school principals deal with extremely complex causal relationships," the researchers said. This, they explained, is a key factor for sound diagnoses of situations. In one case, a principal enlisted the help of a boy's grandfather to change the youngster's school behavior through a combination of rewards and discipline at home and at school.

Perceptual objectivity. This enables principals to see other points of view. "Principals who lack perceptual objectivity," the researchers said, "might assume that all children are like their own children or that people around them think as they think and operate from the same set of motives."

Analytical ability. Principals with this skill, according to the researchers, "clarify their understanding of situations by comparing them with other situations." One principal explained how he discovered the necessity of rewarding two different groups of students (i.e., achievers and unmotivated students) in different ways for a job well done.

Concern for image. Good principals recognize the importance of the reputation or image of their schools. A poor image, the researchers said, decreases the chances of attracting well qualified students and teachers. Therefore, they said, an astute principal works to publicize the positive achievements of his school, its faculty, and students.

Participation style of management. Principals who believe in this form of management involve school and community members in planning and problem solving. One principal described how he brought in county consultants to help with an instructional problem and arranged for teachers to visit other classrooms for observation.

Another facet of this style of management involves delegating responsibility for leadership to individuals or groups capable of managing particular tasks or projects. Good principals also make sure they keep interested parties informed about developments involving them.

Tactical adaptability. This skill involves, for example, tailoring one's choice of words, gestures, and appearance to the audience one wishes to influence. Or, it may mean being able to adjust a strategy when it doesn't work.

Persuasiveness. Good principals not only try to persuade others to go along with their plans, but they do so successfully. How?

First, the researchers said, "they intentionally model the behaviors they expect of others."

Second, they use concrete information to motivate others. Third, they often try to persuade others how a course of action might be in their own best interests. Moreover, the researchers said they found that good principals sometimes are called upon to be "highly directive, letting people know that they do certain things in a certain way."

Commitment to quality. "A recurring theme in the interviews with outstanding principals was the principals' desire to do their best to improve their schools," the researchers said. Outstanding principals, they added, also "made their expectations clear to others."

When a principal lacks commitment to quality, the researchers concluded, "teachers find it diffi-

> "I have a job that is divided into three parts: my day job (7-4:30), my night job (school events — 5:30-10), and my catch-up job (either a weekend or an evening when I'm not at an event)."
>
> — Richard Warner
> Principal
> Fargo (N.Dak.) South High School

cult to maintain the support and momentum necessary to bring about anything more than incremental improvements."

Focused involvement in change. "Moving a school to a high-achievement course requires that the principal have some talent as a change agent." Ideas may come from the principal or from others, but "outstanding principals take the initiative to get the activities under way," the researchers said.

Principals who bring about major improvements in their schools are clear and precise about what needs to be improved, the researchers said.

Coaching skill. A prerequisite for this skill is "a fundamental belief that people are capable of succeeding or improving." As one principal noted: "It is necessary to program out the negatives" and concentrate on the positive things about children and their potential for learning despite the many problems they may bring to school.

Good principals "make specific, detailed suggestions to staff members to help them improve a particular aspect of classroom performance." Sometimes principals may have to help staff members handle personal problems which are affecting their behavior at school.

Effective principals also hand out specific praise. For example, "a principal told a teacher, 'Congratulations. That was a wonderful lesson — nicely organized, no missing information — you kept the children involved with good questions. I'm very pleased. Keep up the good work.'"

"Teachers usually know when they are not doing well," the researchers said, "but often lack a clear understanding of exactly what and how to change. The principal is ideally situated to provide assistance."

Firmness in enforcing quality standards. Effective principals "move swiftly to let people know when their behavior is not meeting standards or is unacceptable," and they do not put off delivering this kind of bad news, the researchers said.

Findings from Other Studies

Although the study for the Florida Department of Education (reported above) dealt exclusively with a sample of principals in that state, a number of other studies pinpoint many of the same management skills as necessary for an effective principal.

The Senior High School Principalship, a study by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), found that successful principals are strong in communication and administrative skills, which include the abilities to explain change, sell ideas, and organize activities.

Such principals, the NASSP study found, also possess a "strong commitment to quality education and a willingness and capacity to work hard and long hours."

"The principal must be a successful problem solver," said Gordon Welty, author of *Principals: What They Do and Who They Are.*

"Unfortunately," Welty said, "there are no pat formulas or recipe books available for easy reference. The principal's skill will derive from his good judgment, his consideration of feelings and opinions, his sense of fairness, and his ability to take a position and persuade those affected to understand and support it. This requires good human relations skills, good sense, and courage of conviction."

How and when to apply these managerial skills depend on the situation. That message is clear, say researchers who have monitored successful principals.

Some examples of how principals must adapt in specific situations come from Gary Yukl's study for NIE:

Example #1: Size and kind of school. "The delegation of responsibility (by principals) for administrative functions should be greater for larger schools than for smaller ones," he said, "since the administrative workload increases with size." Also, problems with faculty and other staff members are likely to be handled in a more formalized, less personal manner in large schools where principals have less time to spend on an individual basis, he said. And, "since there is more role specialization and complexity of operations in high schools than in elementary schools, more coordination and planning are probably needed."

Example #2: Experience of staff. In terms of coaching, advising, and support of teachers, much less is normally required when teachers are highly experienced and competent (here again, principals need to make sure of that competency rather than assuming it) than if a school is new, its staff newly arrived, or the teachers are young and inexperienced.

Example #3: School environment. The atmosphere surrounding the school also shapes the approach of principals. "Need for considerate, supportive leadership," Yukl said, "is also greater when the job is unusually stressful and tedious, as when there have been major disruptions due to strikes, racial conflicts, vandalism, funding cutoffs, or natural disasters."

Examples

Some of the roles principals play in the effective management of schools are seldom, if ever, mentioned in research reports, job descriptions, or case studies. Yet, if the principal neglects them, the school, the staff, and the students may suffer.

An example is the principal's responsibility as building manager. In many schools, the principal can look to the building engineer or head custodian for help with this important function. The principal, however, is ultimately responsible. Generally, the principal must be tactful in working with district maintenance personnel to assure that quality people are hired for building maintenance. That relationship will be helpful in getting needed repairs completed and in moving them up the priority list.

At the other end of the spectrum, the principal has many responsibilities as leader of the school staff. One superintendent offered this illustration: "Principals are liaisons between the central office and the school staffs. They are expected to bring concerns and issues expressed by staff members to the attention of the appropriate central office administrator. In addition, principals explain decisions made at the district level and respond to their staff members' questions concerning district matters."

While the principal should be a member of the district's administrative team, the effective principal will also form a team in his or her own building. Granted, the principal will have to make many independent decisions, but staff involvement in decision making will build a team relationship, encourage synergy, and contribute to a healthy environment.

Selection and evaluation of staff are other major responsibilities of a principal. Therefore, the principal must become as adept as possible in these crucial areas.

Following is more detailed information on several of the multiple management roles of principals.

Principal's Role: Communications

While the school district may have a person charged with administrative responsibilities for developing and managing effective communications/public relations programs, the principal must assure that his or her school and the staff are communicating effectively at the building level.

The building level plan should be consistent with district communications plans and policies, but parts of that plan might be unique to the school.

A high quality newsletter which commands attention, a sound working relationship with parent groups, staff members who are briefed on handling phone calls and visitors, involvement of staff and community in planning new programs and approaches, working well with the news media, and a host of other approaches will enhance a building level communications program.

Of course, any sound public relations program includes a research component. Therefore, the school may wish to conduct a formal or informal survey of staff and/or community on a scheduled basis every one, two, or three years.

Communications with the central office is also vital to understanding and support.

Attitudes of Effective Communicator

If principals and their assistants reserve time for carefully planning their school communications program and follow recommended planning strategies, they should see a significant improvement not only in communications, but in general school climate as well as staff morale and job satisfaction, according to Walter St. John, director of training and development for the Friendly Ice Cream Corp., Wilbraham, Mass.

"Since school communications are so vital to the success of all educational pursuits," St. John said, "the communications program deserves a top priority from every member of the administrative team — especially the principal."

Writing in the *NASSP Bulletin*, St. John noted 14 key communications attitudes that are needed by administrators:

- Desire to communicate and be communicated with.
- Willing to listen — including to bad news.
- Seeking to understand as well as to be understood.
- Having the courage to say it as it is.
- Maintaining an open door, including going to people (door swings out as well as in).
- Making time available to circulate and chat with staff.

- Focusing on the receiver and impact of your message.
- Being friendly and approachable.
- Striving to share information promptly and fully.
- Taking action on communications needs whether or not they are in your area of defined responsibility.
- Recognizing that communications problems are often only symptoms of other difficulties that exist among individuals and groups at the school.
- Identifying informal leaders and opinion molders throughout the school and listening to them closely (maintaining a good pipeline).
- Striving to maintain good upward communications channels, especially in times of change, trouble, and tension.
- Remembering that horizontal (with peers) communication is often as crucial as vertical communication (between supervisors and subordinates).

Building Level Communications Plan

The following plan for building level communications, in the form of a checklist, was developed by principals in the Westside Community Schools, Omaha, Nebr., working with the district's communications director:

____ A school newsletter published on a regular schedule.

____ A parent advisory group which meets on a regular basis and understands its role.

____ Regular sharing of information with the communications department and the media.

____ A phone-call-a-week to parents by each staff member.

____ Feedback sheets for passing along phone or personal comments to the school principal.

____ "Happiness" or "Good News Notes."

____ Parent/teacher conferences that are accurate, tactful, and two-way, and that encourage the building of a team relationship between parent and teacher for the benefit of the child.

____ An adequate system for communicating with students.

____ An effective, active community or booster club.

____ A system for communicating with single parent families and families in which both parents are employed.

____ A program to involve non-parent taxpayers in the community.

____ Staff and members of the community are involved in decision making.

____ At least two school "Family Meetings" each year involving the total school staff.

____ Regular meetings are held with support staff to involve them and help them understand their communications responsibilities.

____ School secretaries have instructions on proper phone technique, how to handle various situations, and practice good communication.

____ Adequate training for staff in planning for communication, in interpersonal communication, listening skills, non-verbal communication.

____ A program to welcome newcomers to the community, including a newcomers packet, a buddy system for students and parents, a tour of the building, and a follow-up to be sure all is going well.

> **"I know one principal in the early childhood education program. He didn't know about the individualization which the program demanded, so he used the money to hire the coordinator that the teachers dearly wanted, who would really come in and help them with the classes. That principal was in such good shape with all his teachers that they would then put out all the effort that was necessary to make the change that he wanted. And he was always buying off people one way or another — getting them released time, for example. He was one of the best in the business . . . a politician in the best sense of that word."**
>
> **— Elizabeth Cohen**
> ***Creating Conditions for Effective Teaching***
> **Center for Education Policy and Management, University of Oregon**

___ An orientation for students moving from one level to another.

___ Opportunities to encourage staff communications, both professionally and socially.

___ Notes sent home are legible and well written.

___ Attractive, well kept grounds. The school is a good neighbor.

___ Plans are developed for the communications aspects of each program.

___ Appropriate sessions are held for parents to help them understand each subject area. Objectives for each course are shared with parents.

___ When children are having problems, parents are contacted soon to solicit their support in helping to solve those problems.

___ Parents understand their responsibilities in the total education of their children.

Note: In keeping with its commitment to effective communication with parents and to improving the quality of education for students, the district developed a "Parent Report Card." (See illustration in this chapter.) After completing the card, parents have the option of giving it to their children to return to the teacher or principal or sending it directly to the superintendent.

Principal's Role: Budgeting

> *"In studies of high schools confronted by fiscal stress and retrenchment, some principals seem to be able to secure adequate resources while others helplessly watch their operating budgets shrink. Those who see that their teachers continue to get textbooks, ditto services, laboratory equipment, teacher aides, and the like have learned how to cut through central office 'red tape' and generate alternative funds. They cultivate close ties with their superiors and learn of the availability of new resources before colleagues do."*

That illustration of the need for principals to be on top of school budgeting at the building level came from Daniel L. Duke, director of the educational administration program, Lewis and Clark College, Portland, Oreg.

As he pointed out in an article in the *NASSP Bulletin*, "resource acquisition and allocation can be a critical leadership function even when schools are not experiencing retrenchment."

Duke noted that many districts now permit building principals to play an active role in developing school budgets.

He also offered advice, in the form of seven questions, on the role of effective principals in budgeting:

1. Are resources allocated on the basis of staff input? (Duke recommended that principals initiate a continuous planning process that relies heavily on faculty input and the projection of future needs.)
2. Are efforts made to ensure that resources are allocated fairly within each classroom as well as among classes?
3. Does the principal participate in the development of the school and district budget?
4. Does the principal maintain close contact with superiors? "If faculty losses are predicted for coming years," Duke said, "a principal with foresight may begin to encourage team teaching and an active volunteer program." On the other hand, he noted, "if a school is scheduled to receive students with special learning needs, the principal can plan in advance to lobby for additional resources, possibly including teacher aides and other support staff."
5. How does the school's operating budget for materials compare with the budgets of other local schools?
6. What does the principal do to generate additional sources of revenue?
7. Do teachers have the materials they need to initiate orderly learning on the first day of school?

"Principals must assess the needs of their faculties," Duke concluded. "If resources are not allocated in ways that maximize the likelihood that school objectives will be achieved, the chances are great that some of the blame must rest with the principal."

An Example: Decentralized Budgeting

Decentralizing the budget and involving principals in putting it together enabled the Poland (Ohio) Schools to drop its costs per pupil while increasing administrative input and bettering employee morale, according to Supt. Robert L. Zorn.

He gave the following description of the district's new "Uniform School Accounting System" in *American School and University* magazine:

"The building principal meets with department heads to establish general building budget parameters. The department heads in turn hold departmental meetings to solicit faculty input. Then it's back to the department heads where give and take establishes the final asking budget, which

Parent Report Card

Dear Parent:

A school system should constantly try to improve the quality of education its students receive. In District 66, we want to continually improve our schools. Our goal is to assure that each student is receiving the finest opportunity to develop his or her abilities. We know that parents in District 66 desire the best possible education for their children.

Periodically, we give you a formal report of your student's progress in the educational program. This year, we would like to ask you to send us a report card on our progress, as you see us. Your evaluation, comments, and constructive criticism will help us build an even better school system in the future.

I assure you, on behalf of the staff and Board of Education, that your comments will be carefully reviewed.

This year, our schools are undergoing a "self-study" to determine what we are doing well and what we might do better. Your continued help and cooperation are major strengths of our school system and are very much appreciated.

Superintendent

P.S. Please fill out a card for each child you have in a District 66 school.

Elementary—*yellow* Junior High—*blue*
Senior High—*green*

How Would You Rate District 66 Schools' Performance in the Following Areas?

	Excellent	Good	Average	Unsatisfactory	No Opinion
CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION Curriculum in relation to your child's individual needs					
Learning materials in relation to your child's needs					
Instructional staff in meeting your child's needs					
Instructional methods in meeting your child's needs					
The manner in which your child's school is organized					
Number of students in your child's class (pupil-teacher ratio)					
PROGRESS REPORTS Your school's reporting system					
Parent-Teacher Conferences					
GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING Your school's efforts in helping your child become a well adjusted human being					
ATTITUDE Your child's enthusiasm for school					
EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES					

	Excellent	Good	Average	Unsatisfactory	No Opinion
DISCIPLINE IN YOUR SCHOOL					
CITIZENSHIP Your school's efforts in promoting good citizenship					
RULES AND REGULATIONS In your child's school					
COMMUNICATION The exchange of information between school and home					
ADMINISTRATION How do you feel about the operation of your school?					
How do you feel about the operation of your school district?					
FACILITIES Your school building as a good place to learn					
The maintenance of your school building					
BUS SERVICE Do you use it? Yes ______ No ______					
FOOD SERVICE					
FINANCES The district's efforts in getting the most for your educational tax dollar					

What do you appreciate most about District 66 schools?

____

____

What is the most pressing problem facing the District 66 schools?

____

____

Are there areas of the school program that should receive less emphasis?

____

____

Are there areas of the school program that should receive greater emphasis?

____

____

Additional comments you would like to make for our consideration in the improvement of our schools:

____

Grade level of student: ________

Number of children you have in District 66 Schools: ________

Comments on this card apply to my child attending ______________________ School.
(name of school)

Please have your student return this Parent Report Card to his or her teacher or principal, or if you prefer, return the completed card directly to:

Superintendent of Schools
909 South 76th Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68114

THANK YOU!

Source: Westside Community Schools, Omaha, Nebr.

shows departments by subjects, complete with enrollments (past, present, and projected), and other supporting rationale.

"Expenditures for the past three years and projections for two or three years in the future are also included," Zorn said. He explained: "It's not a case of adding 7 percent or 10 percent or some other percentage onto last year's figures, but it's not the zero base budget concept, either. It's plain old common sense mixed with involvement, modern accounting procedures, and choosing fiscal priorities.

"After review in the central office, the building budgets are discussed by the administrative council where more give and take may alter things and further substantiate the needs as to who gets what. This multiple step process at the building and central office level does much to eliminate feather bedding or fat from the budget," he noted. "No one knows better what can be cut out of a building budget than other building administrators who will be quick to do just that if their own budgets are being cut or trimmed.

"From there, the building budgets are included in the district's comprehensive yearly asking budget," he said. "The board's budget committee reviews the document, a public hearing is held, and the board votes final adoption upon the

Why Principals Join Unions

The independent status of principals as managers with enormous discretion in the operation of their schools has been seriously eroded in recent years, according to Bruce S. Cooper, associate professor, Fordham University, and Kent F. Murrmann, assistant professor, Virginia Polytechnic University.

Consequently, the two professors say in a report they prepared for the National Institute of Education, principals "are now caught in some vague middle ground between toughened teachers, parents, and students on the one hand and more distant, distracted, and unsupportive top-level school policy makers on the other."

The way many principals have handled this dilemma, Cooper and Murrmann say in *Administrator's Notebook*, is to form independent unions, to engage in collective bargaining with their bosses, and "even to affiliate with the Teamsters and AFL-CIO."

Collective bargaining between school principals and other mid-rank supervisors and school districts has occurred in about 2,100 cases in 31 states and the District of Columbia, according to one source cited by the two professors.

Following a survey of 735 New Jersey principals, supervisors, and administrators, the professors found strong evidence that school principals and other mid-rank supervisors were becoming more labor oriented, particularly with regard to key "bread and butter" issues such as bargaining scope, dismissal procedures, and grievance rights.

At the same time, they said, the data seemed to indicate a counter-trend: "On general philosophical issues — like management cooperation and the importance of merit (as the basis for determining pay and advancement of principals), the principals expressed consensus with the views of district management."

Superintendents answering the survey indicated they prefer a traditional managerial system — one in which they "retain authority to hire, fire, transfer, and discipline middle-level administrators without undue concern for contracts, rules, and elaborate procedures."

The professors advised superintendents to recognize the tightrope many middle-level administrators are walking. "It is not illogical," they said, "for middle administrators to want both security with good pay *and* the freedom and support to manage.

"History has shown," the professors concluded, "that responsibility without reward leads to bitterness and frustration. But reward without the opportunity to lead and make a difference is similarly unsatisfying."

recommendation of the superintendent."

Zorn noted that the system permits building level staff priorities without drastically altering the building's total budget. For instance, if the staff insists that textbooks have a higher priority one year than equipment, adjustments can be made in the discretionary portion of the budget.

The principal, Zorn concluded, "can and should be charged with managing a building within a budget that includes supplies, instructional staff, support staff, and utilities."

Principal's Role: Collective Bargaining

A big worry for some principals is the rise of collective bargaining by teachers.

The spread of teachers unions during the 1970s in many ways changed the nature of professional relationships forever. It dictated accommodation, if not cooperation, among teachers and administrators over many aspects of school life.

Almost totally non-union 20 years ago, teaching has become one of the most unionized occupations in America. Over 90 percent of all teachers belong to either the National Education Association or the American Federation of Teachers. Nearly 90 percent of all school districts with more than 1,000 students are now covered by collective bargaining contracts with teachers.

The effect of bargaining contracts on the authority of principals is explored in "The Impact of Collective Bargaining on School Management and Policy," a study conducted by Douglas E. Mitchell, Charles T. Kerchner, Wayne Erck, and Gabrielle Pryor (published in the *American Journal of Education*).

In general, the authors said, "principals have to devote more time and effort to rationalizing their actions — rationalizing both in the sense of offering some reasons for their demands on teachers and in the sense of making their managerial directives more consistent, logical, and explicitly related to contract language, districtwide policies, and/or accepted educational goals."

"The difficulties of school administration that followed from collective bargaining generally increased with the strength and complexity of the contract and with the aggressiveness of the union," noted researcher Susan Moore Johnson in her study, "Collective Bargaining at the School Site: A Varied Picture."

Impact on local schools. Principals who answered the Critical Issues Survey for this report did not list unions or collective bargaining among what they considered the main impediments to doing an effective job. In fact, only a few cited unions as a problem.

Superintendents, on the other hand, listed collective bargaining as the No. 1 impediment. A likely explanation is that superintendents must deal firsthand with negotiations.

Principals, on the other hand, must wrestle sometimes with interpreting imprecise language of contracts and accommodating contract language to the necessities of running a school. But those tasks apparently have not presented principals with insurmountable problems.

What Principals Can Do

Researchers and practitioners offer helpful insights to those principals who are experiencing or anticipating problems resulting from bargained agreements. They note, for instance, that principals have the opportunity at the site level to adapt contract provisions to school situations and prevent them from hampering efforts to produce good schools.

Speakers at a conference on the effects of collective bargaining sponsored by the Center for Educational Policy and Management at the University of Oregon explained how some principals used that latitude.

Researcher Judith Little reported how one principal exploited contract provisions for staff development activities while five other principals in the same district and subject to the same contract did not. The five principals, Little said, were reluctant to demand too much of the teachers. But the one principal who wasn't reluctant, had great rapport with the faculty, participated with them in staff development sessions, and was successful in getting teachers to become active in a whole range of instructional practices that were only marginally covered in the contract or not at all, she said.

After observing unionism in action in scores of local schools and interviewing nearly 300 teachers and administrators, Susan Johnson concluded that the principal makes a world of difference in whether a union contract hampers the operation of a school.

In one elementary school that Johnson cited as an example, the principal set and enforced high standards for the school despite the union contract. He required teachers to supervise playgrounds and lunch areas although they were not required to do so by the contract. And students were grouped in classrooms by ability, putting some rooms over the maximum stated in the contract. But the teachers respected his standards and went along.

As one teacher put it: "The loyalty here is to the principal rather than to the union. If he told us to stay late, everyone would. People help him out, and he's good to others in response. I guess that's not quite kosher as far as the contract's concerned, but we do it."

In another elementary school, Johnson said, the principal ran a "loose ship," and teachers said "he lets us do our own thing." But the teachers weren't happy. They resented two teachers who did not do their jobs well, and the principal who took no action. They also were concerned over the school's lack of direction, late deliveries of supplies, and lack of faculty influence over school policies. The principal's behavior was contractually correct but found wanting by the teachers.

Researcher Johnson concluded: "Differences in principals' administrative style appeared to be central in determining the shape of labor relations and the level of teacher services at the school site."

Johnson cited three reasons for variations in how contracts affect schools:

Reason #1: Interdependence of teachers and administrators. Teachers, Johnson explained, cannot be effective in classrooms and derive satisfaction without the leadership and support of principals. And long before collective bargaining, she added, effective principals knew they had "to be attentive to teacher interests if they were to command teacher loyalty."

Reason #2: Breadth of teacher concerns that extend beyond contracts. Teachers want adequate salaries, which normally can be attained only at the district level. But, Johnson noted, they also want other things that principals control. These include course and room assignments, uninterrupted teaching time, discipline, equitable treatment, transfers, duty assignments, involvement in decision making, and good relationships with parents.

"Principals who administered schools effectively under collective bargaining were attentive to these issues as well as those addressed by the contract," she said.

Reason #3: Ambivalence of teachers about unions. This, Johnson said, has to do with teachers' concern with the effect of unionism on their professional status, particularly at the work site. Beyond their doubts about the concept of unionism, the conduct of their organizations, and the cost and politics of their unions, teachers interviewed by Johnson were wary about the constraints that unions might place on them in the classroom.

In schools where bargaining contracts and good schools coexisted harmoniously, Johnson concluded, principals "had thought carefully about what teachers wanted from them and what they wanted from teachers. They calculated their actions to expand teachers' feelings of responsibility for the school . . . ."

When a principal honored the contract, teachers "allowed for flexibility, amendment, and mistakes when the principal's actions were believed to be responsible, well intentioned, and in the interests of a good school." In short, she said, "teachers did not want to run the schools, but they were prepared to support a principal who demonstrated that their schools could be run well."

A Principal's View

Bernard Ludwig, principal of North Great Neck High School, Great Neck, N.Y., is convinced that the impact of collective bargaining on the local school "has a lot to do with the way the principal deals with the contract."

What Are the Main Impediments To Being an Effective Principal?

When that question was asked on surveys for this report, here's how superintendents and principals answered:

Superintendents	
Collective bargaining	23%
Personal deficiencies	22%
Lack of time	20%
Changing social values	18%
Lack of funds	18%
Principals	
Lack of time	27%
Lack of funds	24%
Paperwork	16%
Laws, legal decisions	15%
Teachers	13%

To begin with, he said, "many of the conflicts in school have to do with the general running of the school and working conditions of teachers," which touch upon terms of union contracts in various ways.

As a rule, he said, "most teachers don't get intimately involved" in contract provisions, unless it concerns a personal matter. But, he stressed, principals must be thoroughly familiar with the contract in order to administer it fairly and correctly and to be able to exercise their discretion under the contract.

In reality, Ludwig said, the contract is administered on a daily basis. And when teachers feel it is administered by the principal with equity and fairness, the potential for problems is greatly minimized.

An example: Ludwig said the school board in his district adopted a policy aimed at reducing absences by teachers. Principals were required to meet with a teacher when his or her absences reached four.

Some teachers accepted the new policy, but others felt very angry, Ludwig said. But, he noted, he found a way to make the policy work. When he calls a teacher in, he said, he shows the teacher his or her attendance record, checks its accuracy, and "asks the teacher to share why the absences occurred.

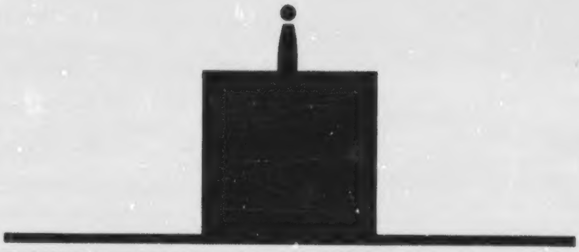
"Nine out of ten times, the teacher goes over the dates and gives the reason," he said. "It is done without me prying deeply, no impugning of their integrity." Ludwig said he is pleasant and thanks the teacher for his or her cooperation.

At the outset, the union had advised a teacher to have someone accompany him or her, Ludwig said. But union leaders soon abandoned that practice "when they saw that the purpose was not to 'get somebody.'"

The policy has worked, Ludwig noted. Absences have been reduced.

Another example. Ludwig also described how he has used a contract provision to his advantage.

Under the bargaining agreement, principals must meet at least once monthly with a committee of teachers representing the union. Although not required to, Ludwig meets two or three times a month with the committee, discussing everything from the teachers cafeteria to discipline.



"We have the power, [but] many principals fail to use it."
— James Kenyon
District administrator
Mercer, Wis.

"I insist on an agenda at each meeting so we can get to the items that need discussing and make the necessary advance preparations to deal with priority items," he said.

The meetings have proven successful — a fact Ludwig attributes partially to the spirit in which they are conducted.

Teachers present their gripes, but Ludwig said he also uses the meetings "to explain why things are done."

"If things are bothering me," he added, "I tell them." This kind of meeting gives the principal a forum for raising issues, he said, and "makes it so the principal is not always on the defensive" in matters that affect the school.

An important part of Ludwig's approach, he believes, is sharing information on matters such as budget figures and personnel and staffing data. Excluded, of course, is information on personal matters involving individual teachers.

By sharing information, Ludwig believes he helps the committee see problems from his perspective and share in the necessary problem solving.

"In the good old days before collective bargaining, I had far more authority in terms of what I could require teachers to do," Ludwig said. "However, collective bargaining does not tie the hands of principals completely. They can work with the staff and ultimately can achieve their goals."

Chapter V

The Role of the Superintendent and Board

Undoubtedly, the principalship has become the centerpiece of emerging strategies to bring about major improvements in schooling, but the responsibility for achieving school effectiveness is not the exclusive domain of principals.

It would be a serious, if not fatal, mistake to ignore the essential roles of superintendents and school boards in efforts to revitalize education. For if the principal embodies the potential for creating the conditions that breed good schools, it is the superintendent directly and the school board indirectly who either deter or enable principals to fulfill their potential.

Through their policies, the priorities they set, the resources allocated to back up those priorities, and the myriad ways they communicate what they want done, superintendents and boards exert an enormous influence on principals — even if it isn't always obvious.

Practitioners, researchers, and other observers report widespread concern, however, that superintendents and school boards have not always provided the kind of leadership that is required for optimum on-the-job performance by principals. For example, an overwhelming consensus has been reached that instructional leadership represents the No. 1 responsibility of principals. But superintendents and boards in many cases have not clearly or forcefully communicated that priority to principals in their districts. Nor have superintendents always focused on the recruitment, training, and leadership of principals as a major means of upgrading schools.

"The care and feeding of principals is the single most important thing a superintendent can do," said Supt. Gordon L. McAndrew of Richland County School District, Columbia, S.C. But often it goes unrecognized, he said.

Principals' Views

Principals themselves say they want better communications with superintendents and closer working relationships to assist them in providing superior leadership. As one principal said at the 1982 convention of the American Association of School Administrators: "We need superintendents who have enough guts to tell us what it is they want us to do so we can do it."

"What one thing could superintendents do to help principals perform more effectively?"

Principals responding to that question in a survey for this report said: "Foster better communications between superintendents and principals."

The responses of both elementary and secondary principals are also clear on this point: Their relationships with their superintendents could be improved. Their answers also implied that what is lacking in those relationships affects the way they do their jobs.

"Spending more time in one-on-one communications for reinforcement and critique of performance would be helpful," said Evalyn W. Burkitt of Moss Point (Miss.) High School.

Superintendents need to "actively work as a sounding board for the ideas of principals along the lines of a devil's advocate," said R. L. Calabrese of Granby (Mass.) High School.

Patrick Corbin of Salem (N.H.) High School characterized the need as one for "honest, ongoing supervision/feedback."

The second most frequently mentioned item on the principal's list of things superintendents could do to help them was to provide more support. Richard Hagen of Waunabee (Wis.) Junior High School said superintendents should "be

> "Principals in both large and small districts spoke of their peers as if they were located on another planet."
>
> Arthur Blumberg
> and William Greenfield
> *The Effective Principal*

supportive of our efforts and work with principals on setting goals to improve."

Superintendents should "be supportive and give verbal recognition," but "should not interfere in the principal's realm of decision making," said Andrew Pollus of Linesville (Pa.) High School.

Kenneth R. Yates of Bonifay (Fla.) Elementary School said more support from superintendents would "inspire confidence in principals."

Third on the principals' list was the need for superintendents to give principals more authority.

"The biggest help would be to allow principals decision-making authority/prerogatives," said Donald P. Forrester of Montpelier Elementary School, Laurel, Md.

Paul Beilfuss of Winkelman School, Glenview, Ill., said superintendents should "allow freedom and give support to 'risks'" that principals may take in trying out new approaches in their schools.

Ann S. Keim of Holling Hills Primary School, Vernon, N.J., suggested "making them (principals) completely responsible for building management with no interference" and "then evaluate them on the results."

The other two items on the principals' list also called for a closer relationship with superintendents: the establishment of goals jointly by principals and superintendents and more involvement of principals in district decision making.

Principals surveyed for the NASSP study, *The Senior High School Principalship*, expressed similar sentiments. When asked what job conditions contributed to job effectiveness, they cited "encouragement by the central office" and "job autonomy" as key factors, along with a supportive faculty, cooperative students, and community support.

Principals were asked on the Critical Issues Survey to name what had been particularly helpful in upgrading their skills. Most said travel to conferences and workshops had been most helpful.

Significantly, the principals distinguished that type of staff development from the "inservice training" usually provided within districts, which was ranked second on the survey. The fact that it was ranked second probably reflects the criticisms that principals and others have made of some kinds of inservice training.

Ranked third and fourth on the survey were college courses and contact with the superintendent.

Ineffective kinds of inservice training include what one principal described as "one-shot workshops with no follow-up." A similar view was expressed by Sharron V. Nelson of Wayne (Pa.) Elementary School. She said inservice training is not helpful without "follow-through or real help in changing behavior or in implementing new skills."

Superintendents' View

What do superintendents have to say about good practices to improve skills of principals?

Their responses to the Critical Issues Survey were similar to those of principals, with one key difference. Superintendents ranked good communications with principals as important, but not as high as did principals. They cited inservice training as the foremost way to increase the effectiveness of principals.

Supt. L. Wayne Krula of School District No. 289, Mendota, Ill., advocated "quality inservice seminars and workshops aimed directly at the essential skills/roles required of them (principals)." Harold R. Hosey of the Emporia (Kans.) Schools suggested the use of retreats and outside consultants for inservice activities.

Phillip A. Whaley of Conrad (Mont.) School District No. 10 described what he called "a philosophy of inservice," including conferences, workshops, weekly meetings on instruction, and inservice sessions which are "related to their (principals') needs."

Several superintendents cited poor inservice training as an example of approaches that did not work. Henry E. LaBranche of School Administrative Unit No. 28, Pelham, N.H., described such training as "traditional approaches to inservice without a focus or theme."

A number of superintendents acknowledged the need for improved communications with principals. Jack L. Davidson of the Tyler (Tex.) Independent School District said superintendents should "be involved with (principals') duties, articulate district objectives, and identify ways to foster positive reinforcement (of principals' accomplishments).

Most superintendents coupled the call for inservice training with other suggestions, such as evaluation, management teams, more support for principals, and holding them accountable for school performance, all of which ranked high on their lists of things that have contributed to the improvement of principals. Here are some of their suggestions:

- L. Wayne Krula of Mendota, Ill., proposed evaluations which include goal identification, problem identification, steps for remediation, and follow-up processes.
- James J. Tolle of the Malverne Union Free School District, Rockville Centre, N.Y., urged the establishment of "written job descriptions with the input of principals, evaluations based upon job descriptions, and setting goals for improvement based on evaluations."
- Leon Sitter of the Fort Campbell (Ky.) Schools called for making principals "a real part of the management team." In the same vein, Richard G. Caton of the Maple Shade (N.J.) Public Schools called for "greater involvement of principals in decision making — make them 'buy in' and take 'ownership' . . . in programs and events."
- Larry L. Dlugosh of School District 46, Springfield, Nebr., provided this overall prescription: "Establish a plan of action with your principals; use their input and give them the moral as well as financial support to carry out the programs. Be *honest* with principals about which skills need to be improved and work with the principals to devise a method or methods to bring about the desired improvement."

> **"Policy making directed toward helping the principal to grow professionally will yield a return unsurpassed by most other school board activities."**
>
> **Renfro C. Manning**
> **Superintendent**
> **Orange County (Va.) Public Schools**

Better Communication: A Critical Need

Lack of communication is more than a minor irritant in relationships between superintendents and principals. It can be a serious obstacle to effective cooperation, some researchers say. Three investigators (Neal Schmitt, Michael P. Fitzgerald, and Ronni E. Merritt) who surveyed administrators while developing procedures for the NASSP Assessment Center Project found that principals "felt that problems must be confined to the building level" because "they could not go to the district office for aid." The researchers said these principals most often used an "informal communication network among their peers for help or advice."

In their book, *The Effective Principal,* Blumberg and Greenfield pointed out that the principals they interviewed felt "very lonely and isolated" from their peers — and "ignored by their superiors" as long as they "keep the peace" in their schools.

"All principals interviewed expressed a similar concern for higher quality and more frequent interaction" with peers and superiors, Blumberg and Greenfield said. "They saw it as a critical factor related to their general level of motivation and psychological health. The lack of having someone to talk to who experiences similar problems was, indeed, seen as a major frustration."

The two researchers underscored the problem: "If school districts are bent on burning out or killing off whatever talented principals might be in their midst, these circumstances would seem to provide the key."

In their responses to the Critical Issues Survey, several principals noted the need for their superintendents to visit their schools more often. Dan C. Lortie, the University of Chicago sociologist who has been preparing a book on principals, said principals want superintendents to "know my school" better.

Sharing Ideas; Involvement. Principals are concerned that superintendents or central office administrators are making policies, rules, and regulations that "don't fit their schools" because their superiors rarely visit the schools or talk to them about their problems, Lortie concluded.

In addition, he told a federally sponsored meeting of urban superintendents, principals are "hungry for ideas" and want interaction with superintendents and others to help them learn about ways to improve their schools.

The evidence seems to suggest that many superintendents are not fully aware of how cut off many principals feel from the mainstream of school district affairs. Some believe this feeling really reflects a lack of involvement in a whole range of decision making in school districts.

"The principals in the middle must be involved in the debates and the planning that precede management decisions," said R. Bruce McPherson, professor of education at the University of Illinois at Chicago. "If it is necessary to negotiate this as a condition of work, so be it, for it is critical to principals who want to be more than simply administrators."

Some ways districts can involve principals: Name them to cabinets, administrative councils or teams, or other forms of participatory management.

Clear Communications

Superintendents must begin to communicate clearly what they want from principals, said Supt. Harry J. Reynolds of the Sequoia Union High School District, Redwood City, Calif.

Norman L. Padgett, principal of Bowdon (Ga.) Elementary School, recommended that superintendents "define the instructional program and the desired outcomes" so principals know precisely what their goals should be.

Michael P. Stevens, who left the principalship to become superintendent of the S and S Consolidated School District in Sadler, Tex., said superintendents "must get out and see schools."

Superintendents who have not been principals, Stevens said, may have a greater problem understanding the problems of principals. "Even if you have been a principal, the longer away from it, the more you forget what it was like."

One of the first things he did as a superintendent, Stevens said, was "to encourage open communications" with his principals. He defined it as a "feeling they can depend on me. When they have a problem or question, I don't view it as a weakness; we just visit and talk it over." Stevens cautioned that while he and other superintendents may take pride in saying "my door is always open," they should make sure it is open to principals as much as to anyone.

> **"The principal, as the local authority figure, student advocate, educational leader, problem solver, decision maker, and disciplinarian, should be recognized, fostered, and acknowledged as often as possible."**
> **Omar D. Blair**
> **Former member**
> **Denver Board of Education**

Ted A. Beranis, principal of Eugene Field School, Elmhurst, Ill., recommended more contacts between principals and superintendents away from their districts to improve their understanding of each other and their problems. Beranis, who helped start regional workshops of principals and superintendents in the Chicago area, thinks professional administrator organizations should help set up such sessions on a regional, state, and national level.

Such workshops are extremely valuable, he said, because they bridge the communication gap and allow the administrators to "let their hair down" about problems and feelings away from their districts and away from the people they work with. Even though the discussions are not with their own district colleagues, the problems and issues they confront are so common that the discussions can be very beneficial, Beranis said.

What kinds of things do superintendents and principals need to discuss? Beranis made these suggestions:

- What is meant by educational leadership? Principals often have many different options and programs from which to choose for implementation in their schools. Superintendents need to make clear what they will and will not support before principals "stick their necks out."
- What are the roles of mid-level administrators, such as coordinators, specialists, consul-

tants, and evaluators? Sometimes these administrators can short-circuit communication between principals and the superintendent and create confusion over policy interpretations and whether they speak for the superintendent.

- How does district management work and how are district-level decisions made? "Principals sometimes have a hard time understanding these things," such as how textbooks are selected, how relationships with boards are handled, why some principals "run into trouble" and others "survive better."
- What are the attitudes and beliefs of board members, on, for example, the nature of educational leadership?

Beranis conceded that "superintendents probably can't be as clear as principals want" them to be in communicating policies and directions for action. "Superintendents feel that 'if I have to give principals a roadmap, I'll be seen as being dictatorial and not giving latitude,'" Beranis said. "The fact is we've always gotten directions in general terms. What we need is to talk about how to move from the general to specific implementation . . . We need you, Mr. Superintendent, to provide some specific ways you prefer us to implement."

Team Management

One way to improve communication and the involvement of principals in school district activities is through the use of team management, a decision-making process involving a mixture of central-office and building administrators. The concept, while gaining wider use during the past decade, also has become controversial, particularly among principals.

In 1976, the *American School Board Journal* asked principals in a survey how the team management concept was working. Many responded that the idea was a "myth" more than a reality. Too often the concept had been "all talk and no action" with the central office still making decisions and principals being shut out of participation, they said. Many principals apparently still harbor such doubts.

Although team management is not new, its popularity was spurred with the rise in collective bargaining among teachers, according to John Lindelow in *School Leadership: Handbook for Survival* (ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Leadership, University of Oregon). Districts enlisted principals on management teams to gain allies in power struggles with teachers unions and also to head off the threat of unionization among principals themselves, Lindelow said. Many principals, he added, feel that power has not really been shared through management teams. They say the concept has been used to co-opt or pacify principals and their complaints about being isolated from district decision making.

Lindelow and others insist that the management team concept can work if implemented with sincerity and care.

The best way to approach team management, he said, is to define the management group as one formally constituted by the school board and superintendent and comprising both central office and middle management administrators and supervisors who are provided with clearly stated responsibility and authority for participation in district decision making. Teams should know what's expected of them — for example, in terms of policy input, ideas, decisions.

In most cases, Lindelow said, the "changes that do take place in the power structure of team management districts are informal in nature and depend on the willingness of the superintendent and central office administrators to share their powers."

Regardless of whether written policies exist, "the real extent of principal influence is up to the superintendent, who retains both final power and responsibility for the team's decisions," Lindelow noted. Thus, he said, the goal is for superintendents "to open communications channels from the 'bottom' to the 'top' of the administrative hierarchy." Team management "first and foremost" is a "structure that would enhance building administrator input into the district's decision-making process."

Lindelow cautioned, however, that success depends not just on the superintendent's willingness to share power but on mutual trust and commitment. "Team members must trust the superintendent to respect and implement the team's decisions," he said. "Team members must also feel free to disagree with the superintendent without the fear of falling into disfavor. The superintendent, in turn, must have trust and confidence in the team to make intelligent decisions for the district."

Team management requires time and effort to make it work. Lindelow said group decisions always are more difficult than single-person command decisions. "But it is from this investment of extra time and effort that the benefits of team management spring," he added.

What are the advantages? He listed the following:

- Participation in decision making increases job satisfaction for most people.
- It gives them a sense of "ownership" in the organization.
- Decisions made by a group are likely to be better than decisions made by one person.
- Collaborative decision making increases the coordination of tasks and enhances the general quality of communications in an organization.

Management teams can be set up both formally or informally. Some recommend formal structures with carefully spelled out rights, responsibilities, and relationships. Both AASA and NASSP have published suggested formats for such team agreements. But Lindelow said any such document should be adapted to take into account local conditions and concerns.

Many successful management team systems, he added, are informal, with no formalized or written agreements. Whether formal or informal, management teams must be built on trust and commitment, and all objectives, organizational features, and operating procedures must be clearly understood by all parties.

Lindelow cited successful management team efforts in the Yakima (Wash.) Public Schools, the Rio Linda (Calif.) Elementary School District, and the Attleboro (Mass.) Schools.

Setting Clear Goals

The case was made earlier in this report that principals have a great deal of latitude and direc-

What's Most Helpful to Principals

Following are the results of some of the questions put to superintendents and principals in separate surveys for this Critical Issues Report:

Q. To Principals:
What has been particularly helpful to you in upgrading the skills you need to be an effective principal?

A. (By frequency of responses):
1. Travel to conferences and workshops
2. Inservice training
3. College courses
4. Contact with superintendent

Q. To Principals:
What one thing could superintendents do to help principals perform more effectively?

A. (By frequency of responses):
1. Better communications
2. More support
3. More authority
4. More involvement of principals in setting goals.
5. More involvement of principals in decision making.

Q. To Superintendents:
What single effort in your district has resulted in the greatest improvement in the effectiveness of school principals?

A. (By frequency of responses):
1. Inservice training
2. Evaluation
3. Better communications
4. Management teams
5. Supporting principals
6. Holding principals accountable

Q. To Superintendents:
What tips would you give for upgrading the skills of principals that might be helpful to other school districts?

A. (By frequency of responses):
1. Inservice training
2. Set goals with principals and hold them accountable
3. Engage in cooperative planning with principals
4. Good communications with principals
5. Evaluation

tion to take the initiative and exert leadership in their schools because of the flexibility inherent in district operations. That is true.

But conversely, it does not mean that superintendents, central office administrators, and district bureaucracies cannot exert significant influence on principals and the way they carry out their jobs.

At the very least, the school district environment in these matters can help or hinder principals to the extent that their accomplishments may be severely affected — however enterprising, resourceful, and able they may be.

As Seymour B. Sarason put it in his book, *The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change,* while "it may be true that the principal is the most influential individual in a school, is it also not true that a school is a part of a larger 'system' that has characteristics, traditions, and a history that determine not only the role of the principal but the activities of everyone in all of its schools?"

Sarason goes so far as to say that unless the system's influence on the principal and school is taken into account, improvement efforts will be little more than "shadowboxing" with the problems at hand. As a matter of fact, he continued, most changes "do not come from the principal but from sources in the system ('downtown')." The point is that "regardless of whether or not the principal likes the proposed changes, he or she is in large part responsible for implementing these changes," he said.

One of the most noticeable ways that superintendents and boards exert their influence is the extent to which they convey to principals their mission. It may be widely assumed that the problem is not so much in school districts stating and communicating priorities, but in getting them carried out. Not so, say researchers.

"Most school systems have not clearly defined what they expect from their principals," said Michael Cohen and A. Lorri Manasse in *Improving Conditions for Principal Effectiveness,* a report they prepared for the National Institute of Education. For example, they said, districts do not make clear to principals the reason for their selection, there is usually no mandate for any particular type of leadership, and the criteria for evaluating their performance on the job are frequently vague. These failures, the two researchers said, represent a major barrier to principal effectiveness.

Does the absence of directions to principals have a direct effect on them? Yes, according to research cited in *The Role of Elementary School Principals: A Summary of Research* (Educational Research Service). In his doctoral dissertation, Allan Steward Vann found a "strong relationship between the amount of time principals allocated to curriculum development and their 'perception of the importance of the functions of curriculum development to central office superiors.'"

Marvin E. Lane, superintendent of the Wily (Colo.) Consolidated School District, emphasized that the productivity of school employees can be greatly affected by the clarity of purpose communicated to them.

In a presentation before the 1982 AASA annual convention, Lane recommended that districts observe these principles:

- Employees must know specifically what is expected of them.
- Employers must communicate the specific standards and performance targets to each employee.
- Employees must get feedback on their performance, allowing them to monitor how well they are meeting organizational expectations.
- Good performance must be rewarded, either financially or in the form of praise, official recognition, or greater opportunities.

Guidelines from a Superintendent

Gordon McAndrew, superintendent in Richland County, Columbia, S.C., recommended:

- Select "intelligent" principals with problem-solving abilities. "Start with good raw material — these people do exist," he said. The principals must also be able "to communicate — in literate terms — to teachers and the community the mission of the schools."
- Establish a sound selection process using reliable assistants who share the superintendent's values and judgments.
- Establish clear objectives for principals. McAndrew said he defines goals in "elementary terms — I say I want improvement in the achievement of our pupils." Evaluation of the accomplishment of these objectives is based mainly on achievement test results, student and teacher attendance, and how parents and students feel about the quality of the schooling. Evaluations of test scores are

tied to comparisons among schools in the district and with their own past performances.

- Be prepared to replace principals who cannot measure up to district standards.

McAndrew said 40 of the 51 principals were replaced in his district. "Initially there was a lot of anxiety," he said. "But that has been replaced by an accepting attitude." He said the new principals feel secure in part because evaluation is based on objective criteria. As a result of these measures, McAndrew said, the district has registered strong gains in student achievement, attendance, and attitudes toward school.

School Board Leadership

Unlike superintendents, of course, school boards do not normally exercise direct authority or direction over principals. But they can still have a significant positive impact through their own leadership capabilities. Much of that flows through superintendents to principals, teachers, and others responsible for the educational program. (Board members also may have a significant negative impact on schools if, for example, they make brash remarks about principals or teachers or if they interfere in individual school affairs.)

Needless to say, the leadership of school boards in establishing high standards, communicating clearly the policies and priorities they set, and requiring superior performances provides superintendents with the support they need to give forceful direction to district personnel.

In some areas, however, boards and their policies can impinge more directly on principals and their performances in producing more effective schools.

In line with the renewed emphasis on instructional leadership for principals, school boards can play a greater role in stressing the importance of the educational mission of schools. Many boards are doing exactly that.

"School boards need to take a greater responsibility for the instructional program than they have taken in the past years," said *The School Board and the Instructional Program*, a research report of the National School Boards Association (NSBA).

The report also noted that school board members believe they "should become more actively involved in developing, evaluating, and revising the instructional program." Typically, school boards influence the instructional program by requesting written assessments from administrators, sampling community sentiments toward schools, setting academic policies, and approving staff development programs.

The NSBA report said school boards could increase their activities by visiting classrooms, setting minimum competency standards for teachers, assessing the performance of graduates, and devoting more time at board meetings to discussions of school performance and improvements. (Another idea is to invite principals to board meetings on a rotating basis to give brief reports on the program at their schools.)

> **"We know of some teachers and principals who refer to the district office as 'Fort Fumble.' In another district, the administration building is known as 'The Puzzle Palace.' Another central office, located at the crest of a small hill, is referred to as 'The Big Bluff.'"**
>
> Spencer H. Wyant
> *Of Principals and Projects*

Suggestions from Denver

The involvement of principals in district policy making is a prime objective of the "school-based management" concept used by the Denver Public Schools, according to Omar D. Blair, former board president. The elements of this concept, as described by Blair at an NSBA convention session, include: clearly defining policies and goals to provide firm direction for school operation and management; allowing principals opportunities to express their concerns and get feedback from district leaders; and giving principals and other administrators support and encouragement for good performances.

Under this system, Blair said, principals are provided a significant degree of autonomy over their schools, but they are appraised annually based on job targets mutually set by principals and their superiors. Board members, he said, play a big role in supporting school-based management through personal contacts, school visits, and "positive strokes" for principals.

Blair suggested that board members engage in these activities:

- Provide special recognition for principals at board meetings.
- Attend local school functions.
- Seek input from principals prior to making any concessions affecting their schools at the bargaining table.
- Provide opportunities for professional growth through quality inservice training, internship programs, and the availability of instructional teams composed of experts, coordinators, and supervisors to work with principals and faculties at schools.
- Promote policies to encourage principals to serve on district instructional committees, interview teams, and special task forces.

Blair emphasized that "board members have the ability to improve local school management, but not through direct intervention."

More Suggestions

A much neglected but vitally important area in which boards can influence school improvement is to create a climate in which principals can flourish as school leaders, said Renfro C. Manning, superintendent of the Orange County (Va.) Public Schools.

Speaking before a session of the 1982 NSBA convention, Manning recommended that boards recognize principals as top-level management, giving them the necessary authority to run their schools. To carry out this philosophy, he proposed that boards:

- Do not assign teachers to a school without the principal's approval. By allowing principals to select teachers from those screened by the district, principals are given "a stake in the success of the teachers" and, consequently, greater responsibility for the teachers' performance.
- Give each principal an allocation of funds for his or her school and the authority to make decisions as to use.
- Require principals to make decisions for themselves about their schools, rather than always providing them with explicit directions. Outline options when advice is sought. If problems surface, let the principals find the solutions.
- Provide funds for first-class "leadership development programs," such as inservice training in school leadership skills, instructional supervision and evaluation, and effective teaching techniques.
- Recognize performance through, for example, incentive pay or special luncheons, achievement awards, and invitations to special conferences.

A research team also recommended a series of steps that school boards can take to overcome what it described as poor relationships between district leaders and principals.

Writing in the *NASSP Bulletin*, the trio (Fenwick W. English, Samuel Francis, and James Schmunk) recommended that boards clarify job responsibilities, provide more support for principals, and open new lines of communication. They had these specific suggestions:

- Boards should define and periodically update the job responsibilities of principals in board policies and regulations.
- Board members should not directly evaluate principals in merit pay-type plans.
- Boards should consider placing principals on multi-year contracts with job performance evaluated on the basis of job-related and program objectives.
- Boards should require the involvement of principals in the selection of faculty members.
- The term "middle management" should not be used because of negative connotations indicating "we get it from both sides."
- Regular meetings should be scheduled between boards and principals to review programs, provide a dialogue, and permit discussions on working conditions and salaries.
- A systematic procedure should be adopted for involving principals in policy making.
- Social events should be scheduled to improve relationships among board members, superintendents, and principals.

Chapter VI

Selection of Principals

The selection process is probably the most important step in obtaining capable principals. By selecting the right persons for the job, superintendents and school boards could obviously eliminate much of the effort that goes into improving the on-the-job performance of principals and the ill effects resulting from inadequate leadership.

And yet, until recently, efforts to make the selection process work effectively in identifying successful principals have often been ineffective, practitioners and researchers agree.

Amid the growing recognition of the importance of the principalship in producing good schools, the National Institute of Education commissioned a major investigation of how school principals are selected.

The researchers, D. Catherine Baltzell and Robert A. Dentler, discovered that the literature on the subject "is thin at best." After interviewing more than 300 school board members, superintendents, and others, they concluded that people who talk about "the way we select principals here," usually describe what is done informally with very little of that committed to paper.

Baltzell and Dentler then investigated a cross-section of school districts to find out how the selection process works. They produced "Selecting American School Principals," which they described as the first national study of the principal selection process.

The study confirmed what is often heard about the process: that "the old boy network" is responsible for selecting many of the nation's public school principals. The report also contained some eye-openers about the dissatisfaction of many principals and superintendents with prevailing practices — and significant, recent improvements in selection procedures.

The picture painted by Baltzell and Dentler confirmed the widespread conviction that the selection process is a vitally important part of an effective school system — and is becoming more so as the number of principal jobs declines in relation to the number of candidates.

The research team said, for example, that the selection process takes on a "powerful and widespread symbolic value" in the eyes of the public and professional constituencies in a school system. They look to see whether the process reflects the vows of school leaders to pursue educational excellence.

The process also directly affects principals themselves, the researchers said. For example, they noted, "without clearly articulated criteria and reasons for the final employment decisions, principals can be left wondering exactly why they were appointed, and subsequently be undercut in their leadership roles."

Reform: Everybody Wants It

Recognition of the importance of the principalship and the selection process has prompted widespread sentiment in favor of reforming the way principals are selected.

Principals themselves are the first to say so. The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) found in a survey for its report, *The Senior High School Principalship*, that "the most frequent response (of principals) to the question about how the principalship might become a more effective leadership position was to select better people for the position."

Baltzell and Dentler agreed. After looking at typical selection procedures, they concluded that "these processes are probably not . . . merit-based enough to result in leaders who can meet the many emerging needs of the times."

The Southern Regional Education Board also noted in a 1983 report, *The Preparation and Selection of School Principals*, that "districts can no longer afford the happenchance or political type of selection procedures. School districts must exercise greater care to identify strong potential administrators and be willing to invest in those persons over a long term." The report urged the use of "objective means" in selecting principals.

Traditional Methods

Baltzell and Dentler described the recent history of selection processes this way:

> *"Since at least the era of the Great Depression, principals in big urban public schools tended to be selected in a fashion that was a mixture of intramural patronage and grooming for the position through the early identification of classroom teachers and athletic coaches by school administrators, with some procedure for certifying, rating, and ranking candidates through a combination of state certification and local examination procedures."*

This situation began to change in the last decade — but not enough to make merit the overriding factor in selection of principals.

To underscore the need for reform, the two researchers described the selection process in the 10 districts they studied in depth. First, they said, 75 percent of the principalship vacancies were filled with candidates from within the district or from districts within 30 miles. Vacancy announcements did not describe the jobs in detail, and the distribution of announcements was limited. In effect, the researchers concluded, the procedures did not suggest a vigorous search.

The criteria used by the districts to determine eligibility of candidates for selection were usually vague and minimal, the researchers said. Local requirements for education and experience of candidates were usually the same as those for state certification. But little was demanded concerning skills or accomplishments that are thought to translate into effective schools.

Typical Requirements

What are the typical criteria required for selection of principals? Certification, advanced graduate work, an excellent teaching reputation, and a personable and likable manner.

But, noted Arthur Blumberg and William Greenfield in their book, *The Effective Principal*, "these criteria are not guarantees of effectiveness as a principal."

Baltzell and Dentler told a meeting of the American Educational Research Association that "in spite of the pervasive rhetoric to the contrary, educational leadership is generally not a very well specified or widely applied criterion for selecting principals." For instance, they cited one district in their NIE study in which the "top decision makers all spoke with sincere intensity about the primacy of finding the best educational leaders, (and) yet, when pressed, none could specify precisely what basic training or experience requirements this need generated for (principal) candidates."

Fewer than 20 percent of the top decision makers interviewed by the two researchers described specific skills as selection criteria, such as training in curriculum, abilities in teacher evaluation/observation, or accomplishments in raising student academic achievement. Even when they did, such criteria were not specified in writing as job qualifications.

Common Selection Criteria

Commonly used selection criteria in the districts studied by the researchers were ambiguous and almost never written down or even expressly stated, but they had to do with one's "image" or "fit" with local notions of what a "good" principal should be, the researchers concluded. Specifically, they said:

> "The issue of 'fit' emerged as centrally important in terms of selection criteria. Every district had a deeply held, almost subconscious image of a 'good' principal or a 'top' candidate or 'just what we're looking for.' However, time and time again, this 'fit' seemed to rest on interpersonal perceptions of a candidate's physical presence, projection of a certain self-confidence and assertiveness, and embodiment of community values and methods of operation."

So personal characteristics, appearance, mannerisms, social reputation, and the like typically comprised the criteria used to pick school principals. The need to measure up to this image, moreoever, produced a certain kind of principal who was fairly representative over the years — white, male, and often with a coaching background in athletics.

Baltzell and Dentler noted that this "fit" criterion works heavily against out-of-district candidates, who are of unknown quality, with no track record in the local cultural milieu. It also works against women and minorities, who by definition may not fit the image in some communities of how a principal is supposed to look and act, they added.

Screening

The screening of candidates usually includes two or three steps, starting with a review of paper resumes and ending up with formal interviews by members of a selection committee and the final authority, the superintendent.

The superintendent's role: The final selection of a candidate to fill the vacant job of principal is nearly always made by the superintendent, who picks from a list of finalists compiled by a screening committee. But that act sometimes represents only the most visible sign of the superintendent's influence, which is exerted throughout the process, according to Baltzell and Dentler.

For example, committee control is concentrated in the hands of top administrators appointed by the superintendent, and they usually know or are made aware of the type of person being sought for the job.

Although the superintendent takes into account the views of others, such as top staff, the school board, and interested community parties, the top executive clearly makes the choice.

Here, another element or criterion enters the picture. Principals are the superintendent's trusted lieutenants in the field, and in working closely with principals on a range of crucial issues, the superintendent must feel he or she can have confidence in these individuals and can expect their loyalty.

The superintendent also exercises control, Baltzell and Dentler said, because "he usually has been a principal and believes he knows how to judge educational leadership as well or better than others in his district." Not surprisingly, many practitioners and researchers do not think highly of such selection practices.

On the plus side, Baltzell and Dentler said that the procedures currently used do succeed in "fending off or weeding out grossly unqualified candidates" and that standards are rising.

What's Needed

Based on their investigations of selection practices, Baltzell and Dentler drew conclusions about what is needed and what districts themselves want in order to improve their procedures.

> **"We met many educators who expressed belief in the importance of the principalship but who are personally repelled by the aura of plots and maneuvers that continues to surround the selection process."**
> **D. Catherine Baltzell and**
> **Robert A. Dentler**
> **"Selecting American School Principals"**

First, Baltzell and Dentler said, there is a strong need for knowledge about how to sharpen statements of selection criteria — especially those pertaining to leadership skills. Second, methods are needed to assess the behavior or performance records of candidates. Districts need ways to determine what prospective principals have done and can do.

Lessons from Industry

Baltzell and Dentler noted that the roles of school principals and middle managers in private industry are similar. And while the state of the art in principal selection is "rather primitive," managerial selection processes are more advanced and can be drawn on for improving principal selection.

Managerial programs develop selection criteria and eliminate unqualified candidates through a review of applications and thorough background and reference checks. But the key is the next step when candidates are subjected to various forms of "employment examinations." In private industry, these include selection tests, interviews, and, most important, assessment centers.

Tests are not good predictors of effectiveness for higher level managers, the researchers said, and the personal interview can be highly subjective unless interviewers are extremely well trained.

At assessment centers, candidates are given tests and interviews to evaluate their abilities, potentials, strengths and weaknesses, and motivation, Baltzell and Dentler said. The testing takes from one day to one week and can include management games, group discussions and activities, "in-basket" exercises, written tests, personality tests, and other activities.

In order to observe candidates' abilities to interact in group situations, candidates are usually assessed in large groups. Typical management dimensions evaluated in the assessment centers include leadership, decision-making ability, oral and written skills, and scholastic aptitude.

The assessment center method, which has gained wide use in the selection of managers in private industry, is "the most effective method of managerial selection" in use anywhere, according to Baltzell and Dentler.

School districts already have begun to draw upon successful practices used in private industry to improve selection processes, but in a limited way so far.

The two main methods that districts are copying from industry are assessment centers and internship programs. Some districts are using a combination of these two approaches.

Here are phases of the selection process in which improvement has been evident, according to the researchers:

- **Superintendent's control:** Authority and control over the selection process are more widely shared among top-level administrators instead of being confined to a small echelon of advisers.

- **Selection criteria:** These have been spelled out in greater detail and linked directly to merit standards. One district that wanted to recruit principals capable of school-based management, for example, required courses in school law, finance and budgeting, and curriculum or personnel management for candidates. Another district established the position of curriculum coordinator as a prerequisite step for elementary principal, reflecting its desire to obtain principals who are curriculum leaders.

- **Applicant pool:** More time and energy are devoted to developing and maintaining a ready pool of tested and assessed applicants. One district periodically rates perspective candidates and separates this step from the screening process, the researchers said. Another keeps a current file on potential candidates who have had entry screening and have been apprentices in required positions. In two other districts, the pool is made up of candidates who have completed required internships.

- **Screening:** Screening committees are used but they are often multiple, and much more time and efforts go into scrutinizing candidates. More candidates wash out at this point. In one district, all candidates are rated on the basis of a complex and lengthy application form and also on references, work history, and interviews. In another, candidates for internships are subjected to "administrative competence sessions," which are mini-assessment centers. Screening in these districts becomes a two- or three-layered process.

- **Selection decisions:** Superintendents still make the choices, but they rely heavily on the evidence from the selection process instead of primarily on personal judgment or that of trusted assistants. In such districts, "sponsorship and connections simply do not matter; an applicant who cannot get by these gates is not a candidate."

- **Sex and ethnic equity:** Some districts plan ahead to appoint women and minorities and do so without abandoning merit. One way they do it is by making certain that candidate pools are large and contain women and minorities. This is accomplished through advertising and using networks of women and minority applicants. One district uses an external monitor to supplement the checking of various stages of the process to make certain that considerations of equity are applied.

These elaborate selection procedures are costly compared to less systematic practices, Baltzell and Dentler said. "Much more time and money are expended per applicant . . ." they said, but "the benefits are so great as to justify high costs." In effect, these advanced selection practices, they said, change the "fit" or image criterion from one that is personalized to one that is merit-based.

"The net effects of these practices are to intensify the merit-orientation of both the unstated and stated criteria and to minimize the influence of vague notions of 'fit' and 'image,'" the researchers said.

The improved practices also provide districts with "especially high quality staff while the candidates wait for a chance at a principalship." In addition, "the legitimacy" accorded the improved practices instills a "strong pride in the fairness, competitive vigor, and comprehensiveness" of the selection system.

"By making the race tough, the prize of the principalship increases in worth, status, and prestige," the researchers said. This attracts better candidates to the job.

Superintendents reported more freedom to make merit-based appointments. They also felt "largely free of the political pressures that often colored" other selection decisions, according to the researchers.

"The 'buddy system' and patronage networks were neutralized by the (new) process, which . . . had been designed to accomplish precisely this end," Baltzell and Dentler pointed out. In short, districts using the reform practices got principals who were "more self-confident, more task-oriented, and above all, more explicitly equipped to lead a school toward increased effectiveness," the researchers concluded. These districts, they added, became "proof of the . . . notion that the role of principal could be pivotal for the future quality of education and that sound selection was therefore strategic to role expectations and performances."

Successful Selection System

What are the common elements of a successful selection system? Baltzell and Dentler listed the following:

- **The system is open.** Anyone who meets clearly stated and widely circulated criteria may apply, and it is understood that all qualified candidates have an equal chance at appointment.
- **Preparation in terms of experience and competencies is the basis for selection,** which allows everyone equal opportunity to work to meet eligibility criteria based on merit.
- **Selection procedures are rigorous.** These include exacting standards during training and interviewing, challenging written work, demanding evaluation, and the like.
- **Appointment outcomes are the real test.** Superior candidates and appointees should result from the process.

Stepping Stones to Principalship for Women and Minorities

Women and minority group members have a better chance of becoming a principal if they attain three goals: competency, visibility, and sponsorship.

That message comes from Effie Jones, director of AASA's Project AWARE. The project's goal is to help women and minorities advance professionally in education.

Not only must they be competent, Jones explained, but they must be known (or visible) to district decision makers, and they must find someone to sponsor them or assist them in moving up.

School districts can do their part by assuring equal success and fairness in employment decisions. A good resource to help in doing just that, according to Jones, is *On Site Needs Assessment and Long Range Planning for Sex Equity*. (The document is available from Jo Jacobs, Office of Sex Equity, Michigan State Department of Education, National Tower, Lansing, Mich. 48902.)

Another way districts can help is by sending competent women and minority group members who aspire to administrative jobs to workshops held by the six regional centers of Project AWARE. They are located in Framingham, Mass.; Atlanta, Ga.; Rosemont, Minn.; Austin, Tex.; Tempe, Ariz.; and Eugene, Oreg. An AWARE workshop is also held in conjunction with the AASA annual convention.

For more information or a schedule of AWARE activities, contact Jones at AASA, 1801 N. Moore St., Arlington, Va. 22209; 703/528-0700.

NASSP Assessment Center Project

Probably the most significant progress made in incorporating essential features of successful selection systems has been credited to assessment centers. In recent years, they have become a burgeoning movement in education for the selection of elementary and secondary principals.

The "most comprehensive, systematic, and potentially important" effort in this area is NASSP's Assessment Center Project, according to Baltzell and Dentler. It has undergone the most careful planning and evaluation.

Baltzell and Dentler, who have done the most thorough outside analysis of the NASSP project, describe an assessment center as "a rigorous psychometric tool that involves a group of trained observers in the behavioral evaluation of aspiring educational administrators as they perform tasks designed to empirically measure their skills."

The keys to the success of a center, the researchers said, are (1) the use of simulations that tap a wide variety of behaviors demanded of school administrators, and (2) rigorous training of the assessors, who conduct the centers in the requisite observational and scoring techniques.

Centers can be operated in conjunction with NASSP by school districts, county education offices or regional service units, universities, or combinations of these agencies.

A little background. NASSP began developing and pilot testing the project in 1975 for use in selection of principals and assistant principals. It was developed in conjunction with the Division of Industrial and Organizational Psychology of the American Psychological Association.

By mid-1983, when NASSP declared the program fully operational, more than 1,250 participants had gone through the centers, 400 assessors had been trained, and 200 school districts had participated in the pilot testing.

Evaluation of the project by outside experts found that the assessment centers were highly successful in selecting administrators who performed well on the job after appointment.

Hersey said NASSP plans to open an assessment center in each state by late 1984 or early 1985 as a demonstration project to serve school districts and to perform as a prototype for additional centers.

How the Concept Works

Each center is conducted by a group of six highly trained assessors (both principals and district administrators) who observe, measure, and evaluate 12 candidates at one time in the exercises and simulations. Assessors participate in three-day training sessions prior to their first center event and are monitored for at least the first two times they conduct sessions.

The six assessors evaluate each of the 12 participants on these 12 skill dimensions:

1. **Problem analysis:** Ability to seek out relevant data and analyze complex information to determine the important elements of a problem.

2. **Judgment.** Skill in identifying educational needs and setting priorities; ability to reach logical conclusions and make high-quality decisions based on available information; ability to critically evaluate written communications.

3. **Organizational ability.** Ability to plan, schedule, and control the work of others; skill in using resources in an optimal fashion; ability to deal with a volume of paperwork and heavy demands on one's time.

4. **Decisiveness.** Ability to recognize when a decision is required and to act quickly.

5. **Leadership.** Ability to recognize when a group requires direction, to get others involved in solving problems, to effectively interact with and guide a group.

6. **Sensitivity.** Ability to perceive the needs, concerns, and personal problems of others; tact; skill in resolving conflicts; ability to deal effectively with people concerning emotional issues; knowing what information to communicate and to whom.

7. **Range of interests.** Competence to discuss a variety of subjects (e.g., educational, political, economic); desire to actively participate in events.

8. **Personal motivation.** Showing that work is important to personal satisfaction; ability to be self-policing.

9. **Educational values.** Possession of well reasoned educational philosophy; receptiveness to change and new ideas.

10. **Stress tolerance.** Ability to perform under pressure and opposition.

11. **Oral communication skills.**

12. **Written communication skills.**

Districts using assessment centers may choose to weigh all skill dimensions equally or differently in evaluating the performances of candidates.

Candidates are put through six exercises, each designed to measure at least six of the twelve dimensions, during the two days they are in the centers. Included are five simulations of the daily experiences of principals and a semi-structured personal interview.

The simulations include leaderless group activities, two "in-basket" exercises, and one fact-finding and decision-making simulation. One group activity requires the analysis and group discussion of a case study concerning the problems faced by a fictitious school and the community in which it is located.

In-basket exercises require participants to play the role of a newly appointed administrator in a fictitious school. Background information is furnished, and a package of mail, reports, and similar things are presented for handling.

In the fact-finding and decision-making simulations, candidates are given a small amount of information about an incident or problem. The task is to ask questions of a resource person, develop an understanding of the situation, and recommend a course of action or a solution.

Assessors spend five days at a center, preparing, observing candidates, and holding post-event group meetings to discuss candidates' ratings.

The final rating reports, which cover areas of strengths, needs for improvement, and training recommendations, are given to the individual candidates and discussed in confidential interviews with designated persons.

> **"There is enough magnetism left in the position (of principal) to attract an inexhaustible supply of aspirants. (But) without changes . . . in the integrity and vitality of the selection process . . . the ablest educational leaders may never turn toward that magnet."**
>
> **D. Catherine Baltzell and**
> **Robert A. Dentler**
> **"Selecting American School Principals"**

Evaluation of the Centers

The evidence to date shows that the assessment centers are working to produce good principals, according to Hersey.

After three years of evaluation by a research team from Michigan State University, the performance measures for the centers are all positive, showing high correlations between assessment ratings and job performance of candidates selected as principals and assistant principals, Hersey added.

The three-year evaluation shows:

- Assessors reach agreement on ratings and candidates, demonstrating consistency in the use of objective measures to evaluate their behavior.
- The assessors' recommendations for placement of candidates are based on information derived from the center activities and not on extraneous or subjective criteria.
- The exercises in the assessment center program reflect the tasks that principals are required to perform on the job; mastery of these tasks is essential to successful performance.
- A strong relationship was found between assessment scores of candidates and measures of job performance of individuals who were subsequently appointed as principals. Candidates who received high ratings in the assessment centers turned out to be top performers on the job. Ratings of on-the-job performance using the critical incidents were made by teachers, support staff, and supervisors working with the principals who had gone through the centers.

The evaluation team concluded that the assessment center "represents a valuable, job-relevant instrument for the selection of school administrators."

Case Study:

Howard County Schools

One school district now using the NASSP Assessment Center for its selection process is the Howard County Public School System, Columbia, Md. The program was launched in the fall of 1980. Over the next three years, the district sent more than 30 prospective vice principals and principals through seven sessions at the center, according to Noel T. Farmer, assistant superintendent for school administration and curriculum.

Early in 1980, Farmer said, Supt. M. Thomas Goedeke appointed an administrative committee to review the district's elaborate screening process, which included resumes, work histories, letters of recommendation, evaluations, interviews, and written essays.

Farmer gave several reasons for the change to the assessment center:

- In the late 1970s, as enrollment growth leveled off and the district made fewer appointments of principals, candidates who were not picked began to ask why they were not selected. The district was unable to give job-related answers. "It was an issue of substantive due process," Farmer said. "We knew we needed a more concrete basis for recommending candidates to the superintendent."

- The district also wanted to eliminate the influence of "ism's" — racism, sexism, cronyism, buddyism — on who got selected.

- The district was not always satisfied with the performance of all vice principals and principals who were selected.

- Questions raised about the selection process were causing "morale problems."

The first thing the administrative committee did was to review selection practices in Maryland and to research information available on the subject, Farmer said. No program except the NASSP project could be found which had been validated as accomplishing its intent of selecting principals who performed competently on the job.

District officials consulted with Paul Hersey, NASSP's project director, and came away convinced the assessment center program represented a legitimate opportunity to "reform" the Howard County principal selection process, Farmer said. The superintendent recommended adoption of the program to the school board, which approved it on a pilot basis.

The composition of the committee formed to implement the selection process was critical to its success, Farmer said. The committee consisted of the district directors of personnel, curriculum, staff development, high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools, as well as district principals.

Performance of candidates in the assessment center became the key factor in the new selection process devised by the district, Farmer said. Recommendations for appointment by a team of administrators are based on (1) the "profile" of candidates on the 12 skill areas assessed in the center, (2) structured interviews and a written essay, and (3) the candidate's personnel file and resume.

Candidates must receive positive recommendation from the assessment center to be considered for a principal's job. Only trained assessors may be members of the selection teams. The superintendent conducts the final interviews and makes recommendations to the school board.

The Howard County district is extremely pleased with the benefits of the assessment center, Farmer said. It provides a sound basis for "discriminating among the top talent" and represents a "powerful element we have not had before" in making selections, he said.

Farmer noted that 10 principals who were selected through the new process were "performing nicely" on the job, based on their supervisors' evaluations, community reactions, board perceptions, and other assessments. The process also assures a "pluralistic" composition of those selections, including a representative cross-section of women and minority persons, he added.

Tips: What have Howard County school officials learned during three years' experience with the center that could help guide other districts interested in initiating such a project?

Farmer listed these tips:

- Those responsible for directing the assessment center must be in direct line authority with the superintendent.

- All "power brokers" in a district must be trained as assessors to assure thorough understanding of and commitment to new selection procedures.

- The superintendent has to learn how the center functions and actually use the information from the center to make selection decisions.

- The training required by NASSP for participation in the assessment project assures that assessors perform according to rigorous standards.

- If a district is not prepared to use the concept in the "ethical and objective" manner for which it was designed, success may not be achieved.

Internships

The Hayward (Calif.) Unified School District uses an internship method of selecting principals called the Administrative Intern Program.

As described by Baltzell and Dentler, it began in 1979 and consists of locating and training potential principals from within the district. After qualifications are set, orientation sessions are held where applications are filed and applicants are given problem exercises. The applications — without name identification — are then screened by the superintendent's cabinet, and the district personnel office prepares files on those who survive the initial screening. This group of applicants is interviewed by cabinet members, who also administer additional written problem exercises and complete individual ratings of candidates. Interns are chosen based on those ratings.

The one-year program consists of various forms of training, including visits, observations, conferences and workshops, interviews, substituting as principals, attendance at board and other meetings, and formal training sessions. Areas of training include personnel evaluation, curriculum development, time management, state and federal programs, due process, and the role of the superintendent and school board.

The aim is to develop professional skills in educational areas as well as personal skills in listening, problem solving, leadership, communications, and human relations.

The program begins in December and continues through June, with seven full-day training sessions along with the other activities. Training is conducted by district administrators and outside consultants. No commitments are made to interns for assignments after the training period, and when vacancies occur, they may apply as candidates with the same standing as others.

In 1980, the district added a one-year probationary period for interns who are selected as principals.

Baltzell and Dentler judged internship programs to be superior to most other selection procedures they had observed. Their main flaw, they said, is usually a lack of openness in testing, rating, and selecting candidates. Another problem with an internship system of this type, they said, may be the objectivity of raters in making selection decisions.

Other Exemplary Approaches

The Baltzell-Dentler study also cited several other exemplary selection programs:

- The Administrative Training Program of the Montgomery County (Md.) Public Schools. This three-phase program includes career development activities, internships, and a district-operated assessment center.
- The selection process used in Broward County, Fla. It has three components: establishing a rigorous eligibility list, screening, and interviews.
- A selection process used in Hillsborough County, Fla., which involves career ladders to the principalship, entry-level screening, and interviews of approved applicants for specified vacancies.

Chapter VII

Training of Principals

Inservice training of school principals in the skills and behaviors required for effective leadership is probably the most neglected aspect of school improvement efforts, according to administrators and authorities in the field.

At the same time, they say the need for sound inservice training is greater than ever, due in part to the resurgence of emphasis on instructional leadership as the essential mission of principals.

Many principals were educated in the 1950s and 1960s before educational research made important advances in effective methods of instruction, and more significantly, before development of public and professional consensus that the prime responsibility of principals is leading schools to instructional excellence.

While progress is being made in the selection of principals, improvement in staff development practices for administrators is not keeping pace. Knowledge about what needs to be done to improve inservice training of principals has started to crystalize, however, and promising trends are taking shape.

Effective inservice training of principals is badly needed because — as principals themselves say loud, clear, and often — their pre-service or university education has often failed to serve them well as professional administrators.

In *The Effective Principal,* Arthur Blumberg and William Greenfield noted that there is "rarely little direct correspondence between formal course work and on-the-job capability of an administrator."

Madeline Hunter of the University of California, Los Angeles, a well known consultant on effective school practices, said flatly, "Most pre-service (administrative) programs are still back in the dark ages."

Putting aside criticism of most pre-service programs, another fact demands consideration. The nature of the principal's job in a constantly changing environment requires that the principal receive inservice training continuously.

Many school districts, in fact, do engage in administrative staff development on a large scale. Principals themselves report that they often acquire competencies through experience on the job rather than through other pre-service or inservice education, according to the Educational Research Service report, *The Role of Elementary School Principals: A Summary of Research.*

One of the problems has been the absence of consensus on what inservice training for principals should entail. "Everybody talks about inservice education (and) some people are doing something about it, but virtually no one agrees with anyone else about what it is and should be," remarked Spencer H. Wyant in his book, *Of Principals and Projects.*

It should be no surprise, then, that inservice training of principals has often been a hodgepodge of what are commonly called "quick fix" sessions designed to deal with narrow topics, such as handling stress, complying with Public Law 94-142, or using microcomputers. These are not unimportant topics, but such sessions rarely represent the kind of comprehensive staff development activities that will lead to major changes in the skills and attitudes of principals.

What's Needed

There is growing agreement that the basic need is for an effective delivery system to convey the new knowledge and practices that contribute to effective schools and the principal's role in that process.

Content

A good place to start in determining the content of inservice training would be with principals themselves.

Wyant reviewed several surveys of principals, which showed they wanted training in:

- Exercising leadership in educational improvement and change.
- Evaluating instructional programs and personnel.
- Maintaining good school-community relations.
- Providing staff development and improving school climate.
- Developing specific skills in problem solving, decision making, and conflict resolution.

Principals surveyed for NASSP's study, *The Senior High School Principalship*, wanted "more opportunity for principals to discuss common problems and to share ideas."

Wyant also polled principals he worked with on the kinds of delivery systems that would be most effective. They suggested:

Location: visits to other schools.
Format: credit courses on a regular basis.
Structure: small group sessions.
Participants: both administrators and teachers.

Key Elements

What does research say about effective inservice training of principals?

James L. Olivero listed the key elements in an article in *Educational Leadership:*

1. A successful program requires support from the superintendent and board of education, demonstrated by allocations of funds and time devoted by the superintendent in attending staff development activities and in "modeling behavior" to show others that he or she "has more to learn."

2. The content of inservice programs is defined primarily by those who are supposed to learn from them. Gains most likely come from activities selected or designed by principals themselves.

> **"Inservice education for administrators lags far behind what is available for teachers."**
> **Spencer H. Wyant**
> ***Of Principals and Projects***
> **Association of Teacher Educators**

3. Training is continuous and comprehensive. Inservice programs often are designed to "fit snugly into a three-hour study module" with a narrow short-range focus. Such "single-shot episodes are often difficult for the learner to transfer to daily use." Generalizing and transferring are concepts that should undergird good inservice training. Otherwise, "an administrator may learn, for example, how to use brainstorming processes with advisory council members but may not be able to use that same process in faculty meetings or cabinet meetings."

4. Participants in inservice training need opportunities to try out new skills or behaviors and to undergo evaluation with feedback under conditions that are not punitive.

5. Reasonable rewards should be offered to participants for actually using what they have learned.

Rewards may be intrinsic in terms of professional development, such as showing participants how new skills or behaviors will contribute to increased student achievement. Or they may be extrinsic, such as newspaper articles about a principal's involvement in staff development, certificates of achievement for participation, notations in personnel files, monetary incentives, or special recognition at board meetings.

There is one other important research-based consideration in designing inservice training. John C. Daresh and James C. LaPlant (both faculty members in educational administration at the University of Cincinnati) wrote in the University of Iowa's *Executive Review*. It is what they call the "special learner needs of adults."

"Adults learn best in situations in which they value the goals of the learning experience and where they can see the relationship between learning activities and stated goals," they said. Adults will learn things that have "meaning for their personal future, particularly when they can develop a sense of ownership in the process." Daresh and LaPlant said.

Olivero emphasized that "the true bottom line of any inservice ought to be tied to 'desired student outcomes.'

"If there aren't some reasonable possibilities that students will gain from an activity (even if the gain is delayed or achieved in an indirect manner), don't do it," Olivero said.

Types of Training

The range of inservice training opportunities for principals was reviewed by Daresh and LaPlant:

Approach #1: Traditional. Practicing administrators enroll in credit courses at colleges and universities, probably the most prevalent form of staff development. The content of such training is determined primarily by university staffs. Administrators typically pursue some professional interest, obtain an advanced degree, or renew or upgrade certification.

Approach #2: Institutes. Also termed workshops and seminars, they provide short-term experiences on specific topics. They are offered by professional education associations, state education agencies, universities, private foundations, and individual consultants.

Approach #3: Competency-based training. This aproach focuses on specific skills that are known to be essential for effective job performance. Training of this type in administrative staff development is being developed as a result of the NASSP Assessment Center Project and the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) *Guidelines for the Preparation of School Administrators.* (The guidelines, published in 1983, list areas in which administrators should develop competencies in order to be effective.)

Approach #4: Academies. Classes and other training sessions are provided by school districts, state departments of education, professional associations, or other agencies on a continuing basis, similar to the traditional approach. Examples are the Maine Principals' Academy, the Maryland Professional Development Academy, the Georgia Academy of School Executives, and the AASA National Academy for School Executives.

Approach #5: Networking. This involves the linking of individuals in various schools, districts, or other agencies to share concerns, ideas, and effective practices on a continuing basis. Most networks are informal arrangements, with a few exceptions such as the National Staff Development Council. (See description later in this chapter.)

(Other major sources of training for many principals are school study councils and conventions and conferences that feature topics of concern to on-the-job administrators.)

> **"Principals rarely have the opportunity to express their concerns and frustrations to other principals who understand the problems with evaluating the performance of their colleagues."**
>
> **John C. Daresh and James C. LaPlant**
> ***The Executive Review***
> **University of Iowa**

'Ideal' Training Programs

How should inservice training programs for principals look under ideal conditions?

Wyant proposes:

1. Programs should be designed for local school situations to fit the needs of principal/participants. Don't assume "that everyone needs the same dose of medicine," as one principal put it.
2. Trainers and training participants often have very different perspectives on the content and goals of activities. Differences should be worked out beforehand to reach agreement on expectations, goals, procedures, and intended outcomes.
3. Programs should go beyond providing new understandings and new skills and should assist participants to integrate into their professional performances the new as well as old skills, knowledge, and experiences.
4. Trainers should deal with principals in a collegial rather than a critical fashion, seeking to build positively on their experience and skills, rather than ignore or downgrade what principals already know and can do.

The content of inservice training was the focus of a set of recommendations by Gordon Cawelti, executive director of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

He suggested:

1. Training in leader behavior, such as style flexibility, alternative models of leader behavior, and what these mean for practitioners.
2. Training focused on management skills, including:
   - Planning, forecasting, establishing goals, management by objectives, budgeting, and policy making.
   - Organizing by the grouping of activities or functions necessary to accomplish goals.

- Directing through coordinating, troubleshooting, and motivating employees.
- Controlling by establishing standards, measuring performances against these standards, and allocating resources to this end.

3. Training in instructional leadership, including:
   - Curriculum development through assessing needs, selecting goals and objectives, selecting and organizing content and learning activities, and evaluating curriculum.
   - Clinical supervision through pre-observation conferences, observation, and data collection on teacher performance; data analysis and conference preparation; follow-up conferences; and post-conference analyses.
   - Staff development in helping principals realize the potential in teacher inservice training, sources for such training, principles of training activities, and ways to provide opportunities to teachers.
   - Teacher evaluation focused on effective teaching factors.
4. Traditional administrative training topics, such as collective bargaining, public relations, and educational technology.

'Promising' Efforts

Although most researchers and school leaders believe that massive reform of inservice training of principals still lies in the future, a number of promising new efforts are under way.

For the most part, they capitalize on what has been learned about the shortcomings of conventional staff development activities and from the research into effective practices.

Collectively, these new endeavors provide school administrators and school boards with a growing array of sound programs.

Here are highlights of some of these promising programs:

Principals Inservice Program

This program is sponsored by the Institute for Development of Educational Activities (I/D/E/A), educational division of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation. According to I/D/E/A, the underlying assumption is that "the principal is the

NASE: A Training Program Worth Knowing

An important source of training for principals and other administrators is AASA's National Academy of School Executives (NASE). Founded in 1968, NASE has already served 30,000 clients, said NASE Director Jerry Melton.

Currently, it schedules 55 to 60 regular 3-5 day programs annually on topics ranging from school based management to instructional supervision and the use of microcomputers. NASE programs focus on research, case studies, and implementation strategies.

"We use practitioners to lead our programs — people who have both content expertise and a good presentation style," Melton said.

Another noteworthy part of NASE's program is its awards program. It offers three different awards: the "Academy Professional Development Award" for persons who attend 5 weeks of training within 3 to 5 years, the "Diplomat" Award for those who attend 10 weeks of training within 8 to 12 years, and the "Fellow" Award for those who attend 15 weeks within 13 to 17 years.

In addition to the regularly scheduled program, NASE also offers a contract program to individual schools or districts, groups or consortiums, intermediate units, state agencies, or universities. NASE works with the contracting agent in tailoring a program to fit the needs of participants.

How effective are the NASE programs? Melton commented: "We offer a money back guarantee."

For more information or a schedule of programs, contact Melton at the Academy, 1801 N. Moore St., Arlington, Va. 22209; 703/528-0700.

prime mover in the school improvement process." The aim is to enable principals to become better school leaders by using their own knowledge of needs as the basis of their professional development.

The basic steps in the program follow:

Step #1: Each principal identifies professional development goals and creates an appropriate plan of action. The plan specifies learning objectives, evidence which will be accepted for determining achievement, activities to be used in the development process, an implementation time line, and an evaluation plan.

Step #2: The principal also designs, implements, and evaluates a school improvement project which involves the staff in addressing an identified need within the school. After the preparatory processes are made clear to staff members and others involved in the project, the principal follows through during the second year with the school-improvement activities.

Step #3: Members of the collegial support group provide assistance and encouragement for one another in both the professional development and school improvement efforts. The group consists of 6 to 10 principals and a trained facilitator who meets with them regularly to explore problems in a climate of mutual trust, respect, and assistance. Professional development plans (Step #1) are shared with and critiqued by group members, who exchange constructive suggestions and review improvement projects (Step #2).

Step #4: The principal adopts the search for continuous improvement as a permanent endeavor and accepts personal responsibility for his or her role in the improvement process.

This program contains the elements considered essential to successful inservice activities, according to Daresh and LaPlant, namely that:

- The activities of the principal and the support group flow directly from the needs and interests of the participating principals.
- The facilitator is trained to assist principals in fulfilling their own teaching and learning responsibilities through interaction with peers.
- The program activities remain task-oriented and do not wander off target.

The Principals' Inservice Program was piloted in 1978-79. By mid-1983, it had expanded to include 145 facilitators leading collegial groups of more than 1,500 principals in 25 states, Daresh and LaPlant said. It is headquartered at the University of Cincinnati.

National Staff Development Council

Founded in 1971, this network provides assistance and support to local school district personnel whose chief responsibility is the administration, supervision, or coordination of staff development programs.

The council, headquartered in Oxford, Ohio, has about 1,000 members, including school district inservice trainers, teachers, principals, university faculty members, and others in the field of staff development. Two years ago, the council began publishing a monthly journal highlighting developments in the field. It also publishes a monthly newsletter, *The Developer*, which lists conferences, workshops, and meetings, and prints abstracts of journal articles. The council sponsors a national conference annually and regional conferences where staff developers are trained. Sessions for principals were recently added.

> **"Of all educators, principals may have greater needs for renewal than anyone else. For better or ill, the bulk of educational improvements rests on the shoulders of the principal, the very person who has been neglected for so long."**
>
> James L. Olivero
> *Educational Leadership*

Research-Based Training for School Administrators

This is a federally funded program of the Center for Educational Policy and Management at the University of Oregon. Launched in 1981-82 in Oregon and Washington, the program is designed to translate research findings and state-of-the-art practices into actual inservice programs in which principals and other administrators teach each other about topics they identify as important.

The dissemination method is based on that pioneered by the Association of California School Administrators' Project Leadership, which employs networking among members to spread good ideas and practices that will improve performance.

The program produced seven presenter's guides which provide practical applications of research findings. The topics include: "Tailoring a Discipline Program To Fit Your School," "Deciding How To Decide: Decision Making in Schools," and "Teacher Evaluation: Beyond Ceremonial Congratulations."

Under the program, two statewide conferences and three to five regional satellite meetings are held in each state annually. The satellite meetings are designed to help participants develop individualized professional goals, assist them in applying the material learned in the statewide meetings, and support their achievement efforts. The sessions are conducted through the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators and the Washington Association of School Administrators. More than 500 principals and other administrators participated in the program during the first two years of operation.

Springfield Simulation

A new competency-based training program for principals called Springfield Simulation will be launched by NASSP as an outgrowth of its Assessment Center Project. It will attempt to strengthen the skills of principals through simulations of school situations using the principles of behavior modeling, rehearsal, and reinforcement. Ultimately, the goal is to transfer the skill development to on-the-job performance.

The basic steps of the simulation process were described by NASSP's Paul Hersey:

1. After an individual completes an assessment center, if a deficiency shows up in the profile of performance in the 12 skill areas (see the chapter on "Selection of Principals"), the candidate may participate in the Springfield Simulation.

2. The participant, who is asked to make a commitment to pursue improvement in the deficiency, outlines an improvement plan with a designated monitor.

3. The participant then undergoes a one-day training simulation of a real school situation consisting of various exercises (e.g., in-basket exercises, videotaping of behavior) designed to strengthen the particular skill or behavior. The individual is able to practice the skill or behavior before peers. Monitors, acting as training supervisors, evaluate the participant's performance and reinforce desired actions.

4. The next day, the simulation is reviewed and the participant maps out plans for transferring the reinforced skill to the job.

5. The individual returns to the job for several months and uses the new skill in the work situation.

6. In a follow-up seminar, the participant undergoes an additional simulation to compare performance with that of the original simulation. Pre- and post-training assessments by the participant, peers, and supervisors on the job help gauge skill improvement.

7. A final simulation is conducted one year later to determine the extent of permanent behavioral change.

The simulation program will begin in 1984 through consortia of school districts in four regions of the country.

Additional Programs

A report by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (*High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America;* Harper & Row; 1983) included brief descriptions of three additional programs to upgrade the skills of principals:

- A special center at the Harvard Graduate School of Education that stresses the principal's responsibility in planning the curriculum. The program underwrites principals' visits to outstanding schools, where they can study first hand what makes such schools work better than others.
- An intensive summer program attended by principals from eight states. It is operated by Peabody College at Vanderbilt University. The goal of the program, according to the Carnegie report, is "to train education leaders rather than building managers."
- A program for the renewal of urban school principals funded by the Danforth Foundation. Each year, five principals from five separate cities are chosen for participation. The principals are freed from their regular duties one day a week for a full school year to make site visits to other cities and engage in university related study. They also meet six times a year with colleagues from other cities and with nationally recognized education leaders. According to the Carnegie report, 250 principals in 46 cities have participated in the program during the decade of its operation.

Chapter VIII

Evaluation of Principals

Evaluation, a vitally important part of any successful educational system, has a highly promising future because of its potential for improving schools.

Since gaining a toehold in education more than 20 years ago, however, personnel evaluation has frequently been plagued by misconceptions, confusion, and outright hostility from some educators. That is unfortunate, experts and leading practitioners say, because evaluation could be a key to excellence in education — if it were used consistently and properly.

When sound evaluation systems have been used, they have paid off handsomely for school districts in attaining better education. Much as schools can no longer afford principals who are not effective as instructional leaders, experts and practitioners say the absence of performance evaluation in some school districts cannot be tolerated if educators are to deliver the good schooling demanded by the public.

As a result of rising expectations for education over the past three or four decades, it has become "increasingly necessary for all administrators and supervisors to systematically improve the performance levels of those employed in education — including the administrators themselves," wrote H. Robert Olds in *Administrative and Supervisory Evaluation*, published by AASA. "Part of the challenge for school management is to develop a sound framework for planned, individualized improvement on the job," he added.

A Growing Concern

Performance evaluation has become a keystone in development programs for executives in countless leading corporations and private businesses, said George B. Redfern, former principal, ex-deputy executive secretary of AASA, and now a consultant on evaluation.

Why is evaluation embraced by the private sector? Because business executives are regarded as valuable investments due to the substantial time and money spent in recruiting and training them, Redfern explained in *Evaluating Teachers and Administrators: A Performance Objectives Approach* (Westview Press, 1980).

In private industry, he added, "performance evaluation, with its combination of target setting, counseling, analysis, evaluation, and follow-up, has become a natural and logical component of management development programs."

Are principals with their critically important leadership responsibilities any less important? No, Redfern said. "Great changes are taking place in terms of complex school organizations, decentralized administration, and an upgrading of the position of administrator and supervisor."

Schools, Redfern emphasized, need the benefits of evaluation to assure effective performances as much as private businesses do.

Evaluation Defined

In simplest terms, evaluation is designed "to prevent and correct error," said Dale L. Bolton in *Evaluating Administrative Personnel in School Systems* (Teachers College Press, Columbia University; 1980). In practice, he said, it entails "the process of making judgments regarding the value or goodness of certain events, behaviors, or results of behaviors in light of certain agreed-upon or well understood and predetermined objectives." At the heart of good evaluation, Bolton said, is the planning necessary to prepare for change.

Note in Bolton's definition that the emphasis is not exclusively on rating how well a job is performed. Too often evaluation has been viewed in the sense of judging performance alone, which has served to undermine the real value of evaluation for the ongoing improvement of individuals and school systems.

In an interview for this Critical Issues Report, Redfern defined evaluation as a "tool to enable a person to do more effectively what the job calls for." In his view, a system of evaluating employee performance is essential because there is simply no other way to effectively hold people accountable for job performance.

What Are the Payoffs?

The benefits from evaluation are many when practiced in a careful and well conceived manner, Redfern said. Such a program, he said, will:

- Engender cooperative effort between the person being evaluated and the person or persons doing the evaluating.
- Foster good communication between or among these parties.
- Put premiums on identifying what needs improving, planning how to achieve the needed improvements, and determining how the results will be evaluated.
- Promote professional growth and development of the person being appraised.
- Stress the importance of evaluators being insightful and skilled in the art of evaluating.
- Make a commitment to the proposition that the bottom line is greater effectiveness in the teaching/learning/supervising process.

Administrators' Views

A number of principals and superintendents who responded to the Critical Issues Surveys for this report said the evaluation systems used by their districts were very valuable.

"I personally found it very effective," said

Sample Objective, Action Plan, Evaluation Criteria

As part of the evaluation process intended to improve a principal's job performance, evaluation expert George Redfern suggests that both evaluatee (the principal) and evaluator work together in developing performance objectives, sample action plans, and evaluative criteria.

Here's an example from the High Point (N.C.) Public Schools to show how these three items would be defined:

Objective

I will develop a closer working relationship between parents and the school in order to meet the needs of the students better.

Action Plan

1. Hold conference with parents to discuss the total school program.
2. Conduct coffee hours for parents to meet with teachers to discuss the progress of children.
3. Form committees of parents and school personnel to evaluate the total school program.
4. Include parents on a citywide committee to develop programs that will affect all schools.

Evaluation Criteria

1. I will consider the objective achieved satisfactorily if 25 percent of parents (a) participate in school activities and (b) contribute to school programs.
2. I will consider the objective achieved successfully if student progress is increased.

Sister Joan M. Cahill, principal of St. Margaret School in Middle Village, N.Y. "It has helped me to face my strengths and weaknesses and to improve myself as a leader."

Arnold L. Kaye, principal of the H. L. Goff School in East Greenbush, N.Y., said the evaluation method used in his district "inspires me to work harder and is generally esteem-building."

Charles H. Hable, assistant superintendent of the Springfield (Pa.) Public Schools, said adoption of his district's "Administrators Performance Appraisal System" was the most effective method he found to promote professional growth among principals.

Evaluation: Past and Present

The practice of evaluating teachers, principals, and other certificated personnel grew out of the accountability movement of the 1960s, Redfern said, and led to the establishment of goals and objectives in the performance appraisal of educators. This new focus on goals and ongoing improvement of performance has begun to outgain what Redfern and others feel has been a simplistic emphasis on post-performance ratings in evaluation.

Redfern estimated that over half the school districts in the country now have some kind of administrator evaluation system.

A large majority of the principals and superintendents who responded to the survey for this report said formal evaluation of principals is used in their districts. Sixty percent or better of both groups said a written policy or set of guidelines was in place for evaluation of principals.

Both principals and superintendents noted that their districts used evaluation primarily to set personal work goals for principals. Both groups said evaluation was used much less frequently for determining salaries, promotions, layoffs, or dismissals.

When principals were asked if the process used in their districts to evaluate their performance is effective, 62 percent answered "yes," and 38 percent said "no."

Evaluation in practice: inadequate; improperly used. During the mid-to late-1970s, Redfern said, progress toward use of evaluation for job performance improvement lagged noticeably. Now, in spite of the advances cited by Robert Olds and others, Redfern estimated that only about 25 percent of the nation's school districts measure up to evaluation standards recommended by authorities and administrator organizations.

The vast majority of school districts, Redfern said, still use what he calls "checklist rating." In other words, he explained, "someone at the end of an evaluation period fills out a form and gives it to the principal, who may or may not sit down with the supervisor and go over it. There is no preplanning, and the evaluation is rarely tied to job descriptions. Often it is tied to a separate set of criteria which frequently have little to do with the job."

Such methods lack what Redfern considers the essential elements of effective evaluation systems:

- Precise and accurate job descriptions.
- The setting of objectives tied to the descriptions as well as to improvement needs of principals and their schools.
- Cooperative goal-setting and performance evaluation involving principals and supervisors on a continuous basis.

The Potential

While many believe evaluation is necessary to assure effective leadership by principals — as well as by those who direct them — most school districts do not use it properly, Redfern said. And therein lies a critical gap in the link to good schools.

One reason that evaluation is so intimately tied to effective schooling involves its "potential for raising an individual's level of performance . . . due to feedback and adjustments that individual can make in response to it," Bolton said. Another reason, he added, involves "the expectations that are set for individuals in the planning process.

"High expectations of competence by others," Bolton explained, "are positively related to performance."

Redfern believes that evaluation enhances education in four important ways:

- It improves the quality of education services for students by clarifying the expectations of evaluators.
- It encourages the establishment of more pertinent job targets or objectives.
- It brings about a closer working relationship between the person being evaluated and the person doing the evaluating.

- It enables the person being evaluated to understand better how those who provide direction and supervision feel about his/her work.

What To Include

"The evaluation of the work of a principal is an evaluation both of general leadership functions and of the specific work that has been assigned to the principal," Redfern said. It is likely to include both general and specific actions regarding the attainment of a vigorous and effective school program as well as particular improvements that the principal or the school needs to achieve.

As schools become more complex in the programs and services they provide, the evaluation mechanisms for principals also must become more sophisticated and sensitive to changing conditions, Redfern pointed out.

General behaviors used as criteria for evaluation of principals should be based on job responsibilities or definitions.

Typically, as recommended by Redfern, responsibilities are grouped under numbered categories, such as 100 — Organization and Administration, 200 — Communications Management, 300 — Personnel Management The numbering allows easy reference on evaluation forms. Under each of these categories, a number of job descriptors or duties are listed. For example, under "Organization and Administration," descriptors may include the observance of district responsibilities, the handling of confidential information, and the use of research findings.

In addition to tying evaluation to job responsibilities and duties, it should also be used to define the principal's work on an individualized and personalized basis. "A major purpose in evaluating a principal is to provide assistance in establishing long- and short-term goals in placing priorities upon those tasks that are the most critical," Redfern said.

"Principals increasingly make their major accomplishments through working with others, and one of the main benefits of evaluation is aid in clarifying relationships with others," he noted.

An outgrowth of this focus on long- and short-term goals, Redfern added, "is an improvement in day-by-day operational efficiency." This comes from the "continual analysis" that is inherent in an ongoing evaluation process in which evaluator and evaluatee meet frequently for discussions. This "makes it possible to find ways of eliminating purposeless actions and inefficient steps which have persisted but are undesirable," he said.

> **"Education's penny-wise and pound-foolish tradition of maintaining a thin, virtually laissez-faire quality of administrative supervision has created a scandalous situation."**
>
> **—H. Robert Olds**
> ***Administrative and***
> ***Supervisory Evaluation***

And, for principals' own personal benefit, evaluation provides an insight into "how the quality of their job performance is regarded by those they look to for advice, counsel, and guidance." That is, evaluation enables principals to understand how others see them — provided the evaluation is carried out in a cooperative, close-relationship manner, where feedback is frank and thorough.

How Nashville uses feedback: In the Metropolitan Public Schools of Nashville, Tenn., feedback is considered critical, according to the district's "Guide for Evaluation of Administrative and Supervisory Personnel." It states:

"Most important is the feedback evaluation to the person evaluated. This feedback can be handled by the appraisee in several ways. Ideally, he will use this feedback to formulate a positive action pattern for (his or her own) development. The second important purpose is to cause the evaluator and appraisee to think in an objective way about both the job context and job performance of the appraisee."

The latter point corresponds to what Redfern and others refer to as basing evaluation of performance on concrete objectives tied to improvement, rather than on more subjective criteria that may be only loosely linked to improvement. It forces both supervisor and principal to identify their specific priorities for the principal. It also allows them to modify priorities promptly if the monitoring of performance warrants.

Nothing illustrates the modification of objectives better than the case of student test results. If scores identify academic weaknesses that require correction — assuming that improvement of achievement is a performance goal of the principal — then the principal can focus through the teaching faculty on an area of achievement pinpointed by test results. But to permit prompt modification of objectives, frequent evaluation of the principal's performance, based on feedback information, is essential.

Evaluation Systems

Although evaluation is known by several names, all systems recommended by authorities and professional organizations have common elements. "They all consist of a work plan, an improvement scheme," Redfern said. "It all boils down to setting targets (for job performance)."

Redfern's model for evaluation of principals and other administrators has six sequential steps:

1. General job responsibilities or definitions are listed in number categories, along with job descriptors or duties under each category.

2. Evaluatees analyze their current strengths and weaknesses in relation to the job responsibilities and descriptors, and evaluatees together with evaluators cooperatively determine how to improve evaluatees' overall performance.

3. This inventory of strengths and weaknesses becomes the basis for devising performance objectives for the evaluatees. Desired outcomes should be set forth in terms of results that are measurable, rather than subject to opinions or guesswork. [Note: Some of the objectives will need to be tied to districtwide objectives; some will be school oriented; some might be personal/professional.]

Three key questions should be kept in mind when writing performance objectives:

- Are they stated concisely?
- Are the desired outcomes stated clearly?
- Are the means of measuring outcomes stated?

4. Plans of action for carrying out the performance objectives are then drawn up. They focus on the specific actions to be taken. Evaluatees and evaluators must agree on the ways they will work together in implementing the plans. Care should be taken to reach agreement on the kind and amount of assistance that the evaluators will provide, the extent of follow-up and feedback conferences, and the kinds of evaluative information that will be collected and used in making evaluations.

Generally, the evaluatees assume major responsibility for carrying out the action plans, and evaluators serve as reviewers and raters of the evaluatees' effectiveness.

5. Results of the action plans are assessed based on the information collected, observations by the evaluators, and any other monitored data gathered during the process. Assessment should include the evaluatees' self-evaluations, those of the evaluators, and possibly those of outside or secondary evaluators.

In large school systems, effective evaluation may require other administrators to serve as secondary evaluators who assist superintendents in the assessment of principals.

Assessment of results should occur at least twice a year, once about midpoint in the period set for evaluation, and again at the end of the period. The midpoint assessment should focus on progress being made, with the final evaluation devoted to attainment of objectives and overall performance.

6. Follow-up conferences should occur at midpoint and at the conclusion of the evaluation period after written assessments are made. The conferences after the final evaluation present an occasion to review implications of the assessments and to begin preliminary planning for the next evaluation cycle, which will start with step one.

Olds's system is little different from Redfern's, while Bolton structures his into three phases:

1. Planning for evaluation.
    - Analysis of a specific situation.
    - Establishment of purposes for evaluation.
    - Setting of goals and specific objectives.
    - Deciding on the means for measuring the processes used and the eventual outcomes.
2. Collecting information.
    - Monitoring the activities planned.
    - Measuring the outcomes that result.
3. Using information.
    - Communicating among evaluators and evaluatees about analysis of outcomes.
    - Interpreting the information.
    - Making decisions about the next steps to be taken based on these analyses.

What Makes Evaluation Work?

The first rule of any evaluation system is clarity — on this all authorities agree.

"The prerequisite of any good evaluation program is a clear and comprehensive definition of the duties and responsibilities of each position," Redfern said. But, he added, that also applies to other aspects of the evaluation process, ranging from how objectives for improvement are described to how they are to be measured.

Redfern acknowledged that "it may seem trite" to insist on clear understanding of duties, responsibilities, and job expectations in evaluation. But such understandings should not be taken for granted. Often in education, he said, the assumption is made that once administrators are appointed to positions, their job responsibilities do not change and they themselves will not need further direction. But, in fact, responsibilities usually undergo considerable change.

"This gap between assumption and reality, which always has existed, now has widened considerably as the impact of change becomes more intense and wide ranging at the individual school level," Redfern said.

Self-evaluation

This is another important element of effective evaluation systems. Essentially, it serves as a guide for planning further self-improvement, Redfern said. Properly used, "it is not a device for self-incrimination," as some may view it, but a tool to utilize the ability of those being evaluated to design their own improvement activities and provide them with a personal "stake" in the process.

It enables evaluatees to "assure a substantially greater role in the evaluative process," Redfern explained.

Bolton said self-evaluation actually "tends to reduce the threat of an external evaluator" by giving the evaluatee some control over the process. It also "increases the potential for creativity and motivation" on the part of those being evaluated, he said. "A program for administrator evaluation should attempt to take advantage of the creativity and motivation that comes from self-evaluation," he concluded.

The Partnership Approach

Perhaps the newest variation of evaluation is the partnership approach. It calls for joint planning and assessment of performance by both evaluators and evaluatees.

"In the more advanced evaluation plans today," Olds noted, "the evaluatee is regarded to be much less a 'subordinate' than a few years ago. In fact, there is deemphasis upon 'superior' and 'subordinate' in some enterprises. There is a

Survey Respondents Tell How Evaluation Is Used

When asked on the Critical Issues Survey for this report the purpose and frequency of use of evaluation in their districts, here is how principals and superintendents responded:

Principals

	Always	Seldom	Never
To decide on increased salary or benefits	21%	21%	58%
To decide on promotion	14%	53%	33%
To set personal goals for principals	75%	18%	7%
To recommend dismissal	18%	61%	21%
To select for layoff	8%	26%	66%
Other (to improve)	8%		

Superintendents

	Always	Seldom	Never
To decide on increased salary or benefits	33%	28%	39%
To decide on promotion	37%	41%	22%
To set personal goals for principals	96%	4%	1%
To recommend dismissal	36%	50%	14%
To select for layoff	14%	34%	52%
Other (to improve)	20%		

partnership-like arrangement."

The evaluator becomes a "counselor-partner" in the process. Evaluator and evaluatee share responsibility for the performance and goals of the one being assessed. "Out of the review and joint planning may come confirmation that two heads are better than one," Olds said.

That point usually proves to be true for several reasons, Redfern said. For one, joint objectives nearly always carry stronger commitments. They also lead to more frequent contacts between evaluatee and evaluator, which tends to increase the effectiveness of the evaluation process, he said.

How Much Emphasis on Forms?

The forms used for written evaluations are important, but they should not be viewed as ends in themselves, the experts warn. The focus should remain on the content and quality of the evaluation process.

A common feeling, Redfern said, is that "the forms are the essence of the process. This is not true. Forms are merely the tools of evaluation, and planners should not become so preoccupied with form design that they lose sight of the importance of the total process."

Each district should develop its own forms. School planners, Bolton said, should focus on the way the evaluation system is implemented, the criteria that are used, and the soundness of the information that is collected for assessment. He cautioned that the forms used by one district may not be satisfactory for another due to differing requirements and values.

Redfern also recommended that each school system develop its own forms and records to meet the specifications of the evaluation system it adopts. He suggested that districts use four basic forms: one to describe job responsibilities and descriptors, a second to identify improvement needs tied to specific descriptors (see sample in this chapter), a third to establish objective/action plans containing activities designed to achieve objectives for improvement, and, finally, a form to report summative evaluation.

Obstacles to Good Evaluation

In spite of the tremendous value of evaluation, obstacles to its successful use continue.

Employees often resist evaluation, Bolton said, because the methods are deficient. For example, evaluation criteria may be vague or subjective, making employees apprehensive about having their performances judged on such shaky grounds.

Evaluators themselves may be untrained or inept, Bolton added, increasing employee wariness. In addition, many principals as well as teachers feel that they deserve complete autonomy to perform their jobs and that they should not be subjected to evaluation.

Another pitfall can be the lack of support from some top administrators, who may feel that evaluation is not worth the considerable time and effort, that advance planning has little real value, and that formal evaluation systems will prevent adaptive responses to problems.

One question on the survey for this Critical Issues Report asked principals how the evaluation process used in their districts could be improved. Ranked first in the responses was the need for a better system or format. Second was the recommendation that they (principals) be given the chance to have more input into the evaluation process. In third place was the need for more formalized systems of evaluation. And fourth was proposed improvement of the goal-setting process.

Here are some of the views of principals on what's wrong with the systems now in use in their districts:

- A Massachusetts high school principal said evaluation in his district tended to be "an assessment of past performance and not mutual agreement of what should be done."

- A New Hampshire high school principal said evaluation "tends to rely on simplistic, unimportant (yet measurable) criteria like report filing." He proposed that important things like the quality of school climate and instructional leadership skills be established as criteria for evaluation.

- A California principal termed the system used by her district as "an exercise in writing" and "busywork." It could be improved, she said, "if a specific area were identified and actitivities to improve and strengthen that area were worked out."

- An elementary school principal in Pennsylvania and a middle school principal in California both commented that their supervisors should spend more time with them in the evaluation process.

- An Iowa high school principal complained that the evaluation he receives is not conducted in a systematic manner and is not continuous.

NEED IDENTIFICATION AND OBJECTIVE/ACTION PLAN

Year: ________

Evaluatee: ____________________________________ Position: ________________

Primary Evaluator: ______________________________ Position: ________________

Directions: Using your job description, determine a need or area to emphasize during the coming year. Complete this worksheet. At the end of the year, complete Section D, Assessment of Results, with necessary comments.

A. **Objective:**

B. **Action Plan:**

C. **Evaluative Criteria:**

D. **Assessment of Results:** (Check appropriate symbols)

Symbols: A - Achieved
PA - Partially Achieved
NA - Not Achieved
(Any objective assessed as NA
must be explained below)

EVALUATIONS

Evaluatee	Primary Evaluator
______ A	______ A
______ PA	______ PA
______ NA	______ NA

E. **Comments:** (Primary Evaluator)

E. **Comments:** (Evaluatee)

Signatures:

Evaluatee: ____________________________________ Date: ____________

Primary Evaluator: ______________________________ Date: ____________

Reviewer: _____________________________________ Date: ____________

Source: George Redfern

Suggestions for Improvement

The common source of problems with evaluation is long-standing confusion about evaluation, Redfern said. "The evaluation of personnel performance has baffled teachers and school administrators for many years," he said.

"Much of the difficulty stems from an uncertainty about the focal point of assessment." Should it focus on the individual as a person or on the results of that individual's efforts? The two are inseparable, but results must be given a prominent place in any evaluation, Redfern advised.

Difficulties arise when the purpose of evaluation is not made clear, Redfern said, or when rating of job performance is the only aim.

Evaluation conferences are a vital part of a good evaluation system but often turn out to be unrewarding because of inadequate preparation, he said. Well run conferences, on the other hand, can foster the good communications necessary for a cooperative evaluation effort.

Ample preparations, according to Redfern, include collecting abundant information on performance, making certain that adequate assistance was provided to the evaluatee, and keeping adequate records of contacts between the parties to the evaluation.

Conferences, he added, should not be dominated by discussions of problems. Instead, they should include:

- Discussions of long- and short-term goals and objectives.
- Recognition of good work.
- Exchange of suggestions for improvement.
- Selection of top-priority job targets.
- Clarification of the responsibilities of both parties.
- Correction of misinformation and misunderstanding.
- Any other relevant topics that may come up in the course of the evaluation process.

A big source of problems in evaluation, Redfern said, is unrealistic and unwarranted expectations of what a sound program can accomplish. It is a means, not an end in itself, he noted.

"Some want to use it to get rid of deadwood," he said. "Others want it to be precise enough to institute differentials in compensation. Still others see it as a means of guaranteeing accountability." Evaluation can go far in accomplishing some of these ends if the system is sound, but many systems used by districts are not.

> **"When the purpose of evaluation becomes the improvement of performance instead of merely the rating of it, results are more productive. Most people want to work more effectively. The stimulation of growth and development is a goal that is more acceptable to teachers and administrators than simply getting a report card indicating an evaluator's judgment of the individual's performance. Creativity and teamwork replace the uncertainty, misunderstanding, and purposelessness that frequently are associated with evaluation programs based solely on rating."**
>
> **—George B. Redfern**
> ***Evaluating Teachers and Administrators: A Performance Objectives Approach***

Basically, evaluation should be regarded as a diagnostic process — one that enables principals and other administrators to concentrate on appropriate objectives, Redfern said. It can be an effective tool to target objectives, but only well conceived and well-executed actions can actually accomplish goals.

Finally, he noted, some succumb to the temptation "to design a comprehensive evaluation program calculated to accomplish every purpose the school system seeks to achieve."

An evaluation program should not be expected to simultaneously promote improvement and professional growth; make personnel decisions with reference to retention, transfer, or termination; and determine salaries, Redfern said. Perhaps all these could be accomplished with evaluation over a period of time, he noted, but objectives should be limited in number and scope until everyone gains the experience needed to make evaluation work on a broader scale.

No. 1 Need: Training. The best way to overcome the numerous problems that crop up in the use of evaluation is through training, Redfern said. "One of the greatest points of vulnerability of performance evaluation in public education has been the failure by a large majority of educators to properly estimate the amount of orientation and training needed," he declared. "The mechanics of performance evaluation are fairly simple to grasp, but implementation frequently is deceptively difficult."

Relatively minor difficulties can be exaggerated into major obstacles. "It can be disastrous to underestimate the training that is necessary," Redfern warned. The problem is that "most school systems don't have the talent or commitment" to carry implementation of evaluation through to successful completion.

Redfern pointed out that districts can turn to professional organizations such as AASA and the National Association of Secondary School Principals for the necessary training in evaluation. He suggested that districts either send administrators

A Step-by-Step Evaluation Procedure for Principals

I. Determine Needs
1. The principal reviews:
   a. Position description
   b. Administrative skills
   c. Past evaluation reports
   d. Current district and/or building goals
2. The supervisor (evaluator) reviews:
   a. The above four items
   b. The principal's current performance in relation to the requirements of the job

II. Formulate Work Plan for the Year
1. Principal identifies needs for the coming year based on perceptions of past and current performance.
2. Supervisor reflects on the principal's needs based upon past and current performance.
3. Both confer to decide whether the evaluation objective should be a development plan to upgrade existing competencies and/or an improvement plan to correct specific deficiencies.
4. Both discuss necessary activities to achieve the goals of the jointly agreed-upon work plan.

III. Complete and Implement Work Plan
1. Principal puts work plan in writing, gets approval of supervisor, and carries out plan's activities.
2. Supervisor reviews and reacts to principal's work plan and monitors progress in carrying it out.
3. Both parties meet to conduct progress reviews in December and March and make modifications in plan if needed.
4. Principal completes implementation of work plan.

IV. Assess Results
1. Principal completes self-evaluation form and transmits it to supervisor.
2. Supervisor receives evaluation from principal, completes his/her evaluation of principal's performance, and notifies principal of date and place of evaluation conference.

V. Discuss Results
1. Principal and supervisor meet and review principal's evaluation and supervisor's evaluation.
2. They sign final evaluation forms.
3. They plan for next evaluation cycle.

Source: "Leadership Excellence Achievement Plan," *The Practitioner,* National Association of Secondary School Principals.

responsible for evaluation to training sessions conducted by experts and practitioners or bring in consultants to help guide implementation.

Case Study: Oak Park, Ill.

Oak Park District 97 in suburban Chicago adopted an evaluation program because of concerns about school performance expressed by the school board and community members.

The steps taken to implement the new evaluation program were described before an AASA convention audience by Charles Railsback, former superintendent of the district and now professor of education at Iowa State University.

When Railsback took over as superintendent, no evaluation system for administrators existed. "My attempt then was to develop a system that clearly described expectations for all administrators, one which would lay the groundwork for real improvement in the future," he noted.

At the outset, he said, it was apparent that the community expected more from the 5,000-student elementary district than was reflected in the system's stated objectives. Therefore, Railsback said, the objectives were revised "to suggest that the staff be held responsible for not only providing the opportunity for students to learn but also to assure that they had in fact learned and could use the basic skills of learning."

The new orientation toward responsibility for learning — not just exposure to the opportunity to learn — meant a higher degree of accountability for administrators, he said. It also meant that new skills for the management of effective instructional techniques would be needed. That training was started. In addition, administrative staff was realigned in order to make the associate superintendent for instruction and the director of curriculum responsible for instruction. To reflect the new approach, the board adopted a policy outlining the requirements, methods, and steps for evaluation.

Adminstrative procedures were developed to carry out the program, including the assignment of an evaluator to each administrator. For principals, evaluators were assigned for each separate responsibility — such as instructional, budget, and personnel — since principals reported to different supervisors for different responsibility areas.

The criteria for evaluation were based on tasks identified in job descriptions established by committees of administrators. Under the district's plan, the goals of principals for the evaluation period are negotiable and jointly developed by principals and the superintendent.

Do You Know Any of These Principals?

One keen observer of the education scene gave his impressions of four distinct types of principals found in American schools:

The Instructional Leader: Always learning more about curriculum, instruction, and management. A consensus builder and community and staff leader. A motivator. Never writes off ideas but tries to understand them.

The Smart Aleck: When presented with new ideas, jokes them away; when attending a workshop, will say, "This had better be good," "I've got better things to do than listen to this guy yap," or "Who cares?" Tends to lean back in a chair at meetings, poke friends, and show a desire to let everyone know who is in charge.

The Enthusiastic Ignorer: Expresses enthusiasm about ideas. Shows interest at meetings, but in reality, does nothing to address the need or challenge if it means change.

The Silent Ignorer: A nice person. Says very little. Is somewhat withdrawn. Feels that "even this shall pass." Sometimes waiting for the days to pass until retirement.

The plan called for the evaluators to compile evaluations from their own assessments and from self-evaluations of the principals, with oversight and final conclusions placed in the hands of the superintendent.

Each principal and administrator was scheduled to be evaluated on one-third of the criteria in his or her job description each year. In three years, all relevant criteria for each position would

> **"Unless each administrator in an organization identifies major responsibilities in terms of outcomes desired, almost any activity in which a given administrator is engaged can be justified as contributing to the mission of the organization. Yet, certain tasks can be ignored and others may have too many people working on them."**
>
> **—Dale L. Bolton**
> ***Evaluating Administrative Personnel in School Systems***

be subject to the evaluation process. "It is better to evaluate fewer criteria more thoroughly than a whole set perfunctorily," Railsback explained.

Descriptions for each adminstrative job were developed by committees composed of one central staff member and five principals. The descriptions were based on previous job descriptions and lists of tasks developed by the jobholders themselves. The lists were reviewed by Railsback and a consultant. They also conducted lengthy interviews with staff members before the final descriptions were adopted.

Then, performance indicators — called descriptors by Redfern — were drawn up. Railsback noted that two main questions were asked to help compile indicators: (1) What would we expect to observe as a result of this task being completed and (2) what would be reasonable evidence that the task has been completed satisfactorily?

The consultant, along with administrators and the superintendent, held lengthy discussions to refine these indicators so that they accurately described what job-holders did. The consultant also conducted inservice training of administrators prior to the introduction of the evaluation system.

Here is one of the job descriptions for principals and a sublist of performance indicators:

Task #1 — Directs, supervises, and evaluates school instructional program.

Performance indicators:

In assessing performance, the evaluator will:

- Suggest needed inservice training programs and disseminate information about required inservice training programs; encourage personnel to attend additional optional training programs.
- Through personal classroom observation and review of student work, determine if the objectives of the district's instructional program have been met.
- Review the information derived from the student monitoring system and use it to see that students are progressing.
- Upon finding that system objectives have not been met, take actions to correct the factors that caused the objectives not to be met.
- Lend credence and support to the instructional program by actively demonstrating personal belief in the program through logistic support, providing assistance to teachers and students, personal observations, and taking immediate corrective action when such is deemed necessary.

Chapter IX

Stress and the Principal

“To understand the dilemma of the principal, one must begin by recognizing that the principal views his or her role . . . as implying leadership. Whatever the motivations for seeking the position, they did not include being a housekeeper, or highly paid clerk, or embattled figurehead. Initially, at least, the principal expects the school to bear the stamp of his or her conception of what good education and a good school are . . . The principal wants to be influential. The dilemma begins when the principal realizes that words and power, far from guaranteeing intended outcomes, may be ineffectual and even produce the opposite of what is desired.”

This passage from Seymour B. Sarason's perceptive book, *The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change*, captures the underlying sense of frustration that many principals feel about their jobs today.

This frustration, which also surfaced in principals' replies to the survey for this report, stems from causes such as the changing nature of the principalship and the impediments to successful leadership.

In response to the Critical Issues Survey for this report, principals and superintendents listed many impediments to effective leadership, including collective bargaining, budget problems, paperwork, and new laws and legal court decisions.

Central office administrators sometimes are responsible for unnecessary stress imposed on principals — when they assign too much paperwork, have too many meetings, never recognize good work, are overly critical, ignore the schools, or put principals in the position of “being caught in the middle.” The latter situation results when decisions which principals must carry out are made by central office administrators — without input from the principals.

Principals and researchers also point to a lack of clarity about the principalship as a main source of frustration. When asked what could be done to make the job of principal more manageable and effective, principals interviewed for a study by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) cited “role clarification.”

Their suggestions for change ranged from spelling out the legal status of the principalship to improving the understanding and recognition of the job by teachers, the community, and, in particular, the central office.

One main problem is that “most school systems have not clearly defined what they expect from their principals,” wrote Michael Cohen and A. Lorri Manasse in a paper prepared for a meeting of the Urban Superintendents Network, sponsored by the National Institute of Education.

“Principals themselves often do not know why they were selected for a position,” Cohen and Manasse said. “Thus, there is no clear mandate for any particular type of leadership behavior, no articulated criteria for evaluating effectiveness, and little opportunity for principals to get useful feedback on their performance.”

In their comments on the survey for this report, the vast majority of principals picked “instructional leader” as the most important role of principals. But many commented that such roles as keeper of discipline, plant manager, and director of community relations actually dominated what they did as principals.

All too often, Sarason noted, this conflict results in feelings of inadequacy. "The principal is constantly wrestling with the problem of leadership (while having) the feeling that the battle is being lost, that the individual is not the leader he or she expected to be . . . ."

Ironically, this sense of personal failure would not exist without the principal's own recognition of his or her leadership responsibilities. "The price these principals pay for their determination to do a good job is their disappointment or frustration at mistakes they've made" or the obstacles they have not been able to overcome, according to McBer and Co.'s study of principals for the Florida Department of Education.

The Result: Stress

Faced with myriad frustrations, principals lead more stressful lives.

Michael P. Stevens, former principal of Columbia High School, West Columbia, Tex., put it aptly: "Stress is an overworked term, but I will assure you it is very real."

Many of the problems are the same as in earlier days, Stevens said, but the intensity of those problems — the pressure to reach satisfactory, enduring solutions — is greater than ever.

Arthur O. Motz, principal of Soldotna (Alaska) Junior High School, added that training or skills in "coping with or preventing stress" are essential to being an effective instructional leader.

This is where superintendents come in. They must take the lead in supporting principals and in helping them avoid unnecessary stress.

What can they do? First, they must understand the causes and symptoms of stress.

Understanding Stress

Stress begins with anxiety resulting from a kind of imbalance within a person, like a threatening condition or disharmony, said William C. Miller in *Dealing with Stress: A Challenge for Educators* (Phi Delta Kappa, Bloomington, Ind.).

This anxiety leads to tension, a physical reaction often exhibited in nervous impulses which cause changes in the body. When tension reaches a degree of intensity that has an adverse effect on the body, Miller said, the result is stress.

Stress can cause a wide variety of physical problems, often debilitating and frequently damaging to work performance. And, as is too rarely recognized, it can kill.

According to Joseph F. Montague, an authority with 50 years' experience in studying stress, there are two sources of stress, one self-imposed and the other situational.

Self-imposed stress comes not from overwork but from "overtrying" and from unrealistic expectations.

Situational stress results from the demands of others, the conflict among people, the clash of values. Often, it simply means "being caught between what one believes and what one must do." Examples could include: operating schools with inadequate funds, seeing enrollments decline, laying off good teachers, handling an endless trail of crises.

Two serious consequences of stress overload are apathy and capitulation, according to Dolores M. and Michael C. Giammatteo in their book for NASSP, *Executive Well-Being: Stress and Administrators.*

Apathy "is a high level of pent-up hostility" and in the face of continued stress, "it is a barrier against future hurt or disappointment," they said.

Capitulation means giving up and "is rooted in failure to believe in your ability to make decisions," they added.

According to researchers, stress exists to a greater degree in persons who serve in positions which deal with people. "Managerial jobs are especially stress-prone," said Nina Gupta in *Stress in the Work Place* (published by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, Austin, Tex.).

Why? First, Gupta said, managers tend to experience many "stressors," such as time pressures and responsibility for people. Second, managerial ranks are dominated by certain personality characteristics, such as aggressiveness, ambition, and competitiveness. Third, the strategic position of managers makes the job "intrinsically stressful."

What she said of plant foremen applies to principals as well: "On the one hand, they are responsible to upper management for the attitudes and behaviors of their subordinates; on the other hand, they are responsible to their subordinates for communicating the policies, rules, regulations, and opinions of upper management."

Other researchers have found that the greater one's sense of powerlessness over the stressor, the greater the stress.

Warning Signs Cited

The Firestone Tire Co. identified the characteristics of persons who may be candidates for the ills of stress. It advised that anyone who answers "yes" to more than half of the following questions needs to sit back and make an effort to relax, channel his or her ambition, set different goals, and worry less.

__ Do you compete a lot and feel that you should always win?

__ Are you always engaged in more projects than you can see the end of?

__ Do you set extremely high goals for yourself?

__ Do you take "pep pills" when you're tired and sedatives when you can't sleep?

__ Do you find it hard to delegate authority?

__ Do you try to carry the load yourself?

__ Do you have an intense desire to get ahead?

__ Do you lose your temper often?

__ Are most of your recreational activities tied to your business activities?

__ Do you often lose sight of what's really important at work and at home?

__ Are you anxious to reach your goals but unsure of exactly how to reach them?

Signs of Stress Overload

Some persons are not only candidates for the ills of stress, but they are victims. In *Combatting Occupational Burn-Out in the Helping Professions*, Jay Cleve of the University of Wisconsin listed the following signs of stress overload:

__ Accident proneness, physical disorders, and susceptibility to illness

__ Indecisiveness

__ Personal doubts

__ Guilt

__ Personal and inter-personal withdrawal

__ Psychological rigidity

__ Longer working hours and lower productivity

__ Existential and philosophical doubts

__ Blame and resentment

__ Cynicism and griping

__ Apathy

__ Task avoidance

__ Unnecessary risk taking

What Can Be Done?

Dolores and Michael Giammatteo say that controlling emotions and stress first entails controlling one's thoughts.

They recommend four steps for coming to grips with potential stress through the thought process:

1. Becoming aware of the internal and external things that cause stress. Simply knowing the external requirements of a job and oneself as thoroughly as possible go a long way toward coping with stress. Knowing how to meet demands and when to shift attitudes allow a range of choices for reactions to events that can cause stress.

2. Developing techniques to tolerate stress. They include:

- Analyzing the stressor and questioning whether it is worth expending emotions, energy, or time on it.
- Coping directly with the stressor if in possession of the necessary knowledge or training to deal with its particular demands, such as legal questions, fact-finding procedures, and report preparation.
- Preparing alternative approaches to coping by devising them prior to an event, ranking them, and writing them down for closer examination.
- Sharing or delegating authority to gain help and support in coping with stressors.

3. Identifying the source of stress in the work, social/recreational, or personal/home worlds and making sure there is a balance among the three. A person may not be aware of overload in one of these worlds.

4. Mapping out ways to deal effectively with the stressors. They may include:

- Allocating less time to each stressor.
- Disregarding low-priority events.
- Delegating responsibilities.
- Taking phone breaks with the phone off the hook.
- Listing priorities each day for the next day to improve organization.
- Allowing time for interaction with a trusted friend to soothe the emotions.

Effective principals studied for the NASSP report, *The Senior High School Principalship*, employed four basic methods for handling stress:

1. Getting out of the office or away from the source of stress and walking around, or engaging

in some kind of recreational activity away from work.

2. Developing a sense of perspective about the problem of stress by acknowledging it exists, trying to not let it get to them, being realistic about what could be accomplished, doing their best and avoiding worry, realizing there will always be tomorrow, and keeping a sense of humor.

3. Discussing the stress with others, including professional colleagues.

4. Diagnosing the causes of stress and attempting to modify them.

Note: Authorities caution that coping skills are complex and need to be flexible because their success may often depend on the situation. They add that individuals may have to experiment to find the technique that is most appropriate for them.

Finally, they add, perhaps the most effective approach is to acquire the best job preparation possible and then continually update professional skills. Superintendents and boards of education can make the latter possible by investing in inservice training for principals on topics such as stress and time management. They should also look at the individual and organizational factors that could be making the principal's job more stressful, and initiate the appropriate changes.

Do's and Don'ts for Reducing Stress on the Job

Do's:

✓ Develop job skills. Prevent job-generated tension by becoming a more knowledgeable and efficient principal and by preparing for the unexpected. Learn techniques of planning, time management, conflict management, communicating, and problem solving.

✓ Reduce noise, distractions, and interruptions.

✓ Do the disagreeable tasks first, saving the pleasant ones for last.

✓ Take one problem at a time — the most urgent first.

✓ Take relaxation breaks from demanding work, such as short walks, a crossword puzzle, a quick nap, or just standing up and breathing deeply.

✓ Schedule appointments with yourself to plan time for recreation, rest, and diversion — and keep these appointments.

Don'ts:

✓ Don't work on weekends. Try to keep evenings free.

✓ Don't have working lunches. Use them for relaxation.

✓ Don't push people around. Seek collaboration and teamwork.

✓ Don't procrastinate. Unsolved problems breed stress.

✓ Don't let others push you around. Demand fair treatment.

✓ Don't become a slave to work. It may kill you.

✓ Don't overemphasize competition.

✓ Don't go to bed in a state of emotional tension. Take a walk to burn off tension and produce enough fatigue to calm a troubled mind.

✓ Don't harbor resentments or hate, and don't seek to retaliate.

✓ Don't set unrealistic goals. Set challenging ones with a reasonable chance of success.

✓ Don't measure your accomplishments by single events, but over longer periods.

✓ Don't resent problems. Tackle them and enjoy life.

Source: William C. Miller, *Dealing with Stress: A Challenge for Educators;* Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.

Other AASA Critical Issues Reports

Planning for Tomorrow's Schools: Problems and Solutions. This report examines the essential ingredients of effective planning. If offers several models for district planning; checklists for administrators responsible for planning; advice on involving staff and community, and setting goals and priorities; and a detailed case study of long-range planning. Also included are chapters on: demographics, politics and finance, attracting and holding top-notch teachers, examining the curriculum, using computers and technology in instruction, and tomorrow's jobs. (80pp; 1983; $12.95; Stock No. 021-00832)

Building Morale . . . Motivating Staff: Problems and Solutions. Declining enrollment, little turnover, limited advancement opportunities, budget cuts, autocratic principals — all can lead to decreased morale and motivation on the part of teachers. In this report, teachers, administrators, and researchers identify morale builders and morale killers. Also included: in-depth case studies and sketches of districts with excellent morale; a way administrators can determine the health of their district; and tips on inservice education, communications, evaluation, and managing conflict. (80pp; 1983; $11.95; Stock No. 021-00834)

Teaching Writing: Problems and Solutions. Student writing is a major problem in the nation's schools. This report tells what districts and schools can do to improve the teaching of writing. It describes some of the country's most successful writing programs, how students can be taught to use the process used by professional writers, 13 ingredients for successful programs, tips on inservice training for teachers, the principal's role, how to assess and grade student writing. Includes interviews with several experts on teaching writing. (96pp; 1982; $11.95; Stock No. 021-00901)

School Budgeting: Problems and Solutions. Districts should receive their fair share of tax dollars if they develop reasonable, understandable, and defensible budgets. This report describes how to make the budget an integral part of the school program; budgeting methods; involving staff, community, and students; planning ahead; and primers on finance campaigns, P.R., negotiations, and lobbying. (72pp; 1982; $10.95; Stock No. 021-00900)

Declining Enrollment — Closing Schools: Problems and Solutions. This report details lessons learned about declining enrollment, among them: administrators must be "managers of change"; the importance of planning; effective use of staff and citizen committees; and the need to tune up board policies in 25 areas. Also includes advice on public relations, projecting enrollment, empty school space, and staff reduction. Selected as "must reading" by the National School Boards Association in its 1981 review of education books. (88pp; 1981; $10.95; Stock No. 021-00336)

Collective Bargaining: Problems and Solutions. This report can help administrators and boards improve their understanding of negotiations. Includes advice on: what to include and to omit from negotiated contracts, contract language, table strategies, impasse, contract administration, grievances, communications, salaries, reduction in force clauses. Selected as "must reading" by the National School Boards Association in its 1981 review of education books. (95pp; 1981; $10.95; Stock No. 021-00330)

Student Discipline: Problems and Solutions. Many measures can be used to prevent unacceptable student behavior. This report defines: how school boards set policy on discipline; using the student handbook to manage student conduct; ways to involve parents; and advice on curriculum improvement, vandalism, smoking, corporal punishment, suspension. Selected as "must reading" by the National School Boards Association in its 1980 review of education books. (80pp; 1980; $9.95; Stock No. 021-00334)

How Schools Can Save $$: Problems and Solutions. Balancing the school budget is one of the toughest jobs confronting schools. This report includes suggestions and case studies on cutting the costs of staffing, fringe benefits, energy, and insurance. (80pp; 1980; $8.95; Stock No. 021-00333)

Teacher Competency: Problems and Solutions. This report tells what research says about "good" teachers, what administrators can do to improve teachers, how to reward teachers for good teaching. Selected as "must reading" by the National School Boards Association in its 1980 review of education books. (80pp; 1980; $8.95; Stock No. 021-00332)

Keeping Students in School: Problems and Solutions. This report analyzes truancy and other aspects of student attendance. It examines why students stay away from school, why they drop out, and how to cope with attendance problems. (79pp; 1979; $8.95; Stock No. 021-00331)

Staff Dismissal: Problems and Solutions. Who says teachers and other school employees can't be fired? They can. School districts can dismiss staff members in cases of incompetence or when declining enrollment or budget problems demand cuts. (80pp; 1978; $8.95; Stock No. 021-00512)

The Competency Movement: Problems and Solutions. This report explains the pros and cons of the minimum competency movement. It includes: considerations in adopting a student competency policy, what kinds of tests can be used, how districts and states are implementing competency requirements. (92pp; 1978; $8.95; Stock No. 021-00510)

School Energy Crisis: Problems and Solutions. Schools don't have to sit immobilized while they're clobbered by higher energy costs. This report describes solutions, including: energy audits, how to hire energy consultants, transportation tips. (88pp; 1977; $8.95; Stock No. 021-00380)

Discount and Ordering Information

Order from the American Association of School Administrators, 1801 N. Moore St., Arlington, Va. 22209. To order a single copy of any report, please add $1.50 for postage and handling. Orders for less than $15 must be accompanied by payment in full. Discount on any one Critical Issues Report: two to nine copies, 10% discount. Write for prices of 10 or more copies. Please indicate stock numbers on orders.